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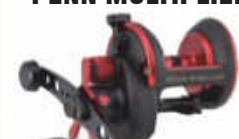


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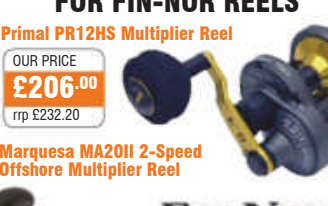
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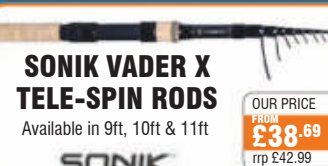


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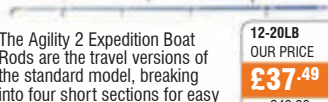
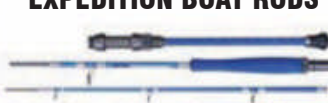
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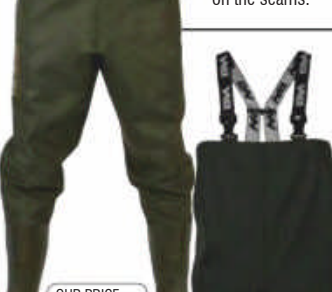
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WELCOME

Sea Angler Issue 587 On sale Aug 20 – Sept 16

SOME STAGGERING STATISTICS ARE COMING OUT OF CORNWALL about what appears to be out of control netting of bass, which could ruin conservation strategies to safeguard this popular angling species. Yet those who are tasked with controlling this are, seemingly, doing nothing.

Shocking new landing data from the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) shows landings of bass by Cornish netting vessels have increased by a 43 per cent, despite restrictions intended to reduce landings and allow the threatened bass stock to recover. At the same time, net-caught bass landings in the rest of England have decreased by threequarters.

Save Our Sea Bass, the campaigning arm of the Bass Anglers' Sportfishing Society, suspects that Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority is not monitoring fish landings. Believe it or not, Sam Davis, chief officer of Cornwall IFCA, told the Western Morning News that she was unclear how the Cornish Federation of Sea Anglers had arrived at the figures, yet her organisation shares the same building as the MMO officers who collected the data. You couldn't make it up.

Save Our Sea Bass has discovered that between 2013 and 2019, landings of net-caught bass into Mevagissey almost tripled from 3.2 tonnes to 9.2 tonnes, while landings of net-caught bass into the rest of England decreased by 75 per cent.

It gets worse. In 2016, when it was still possible for netters to legally target bass, net-caught bass landings in Mevagissey were 1.2 tonnes. Since 2017, it has been illegal for netters to target bass, yet in Mevagissey their bass landings rose to 9.2 tonnes in 2019, a seven-fold rise since 2016. On the rankings of ports landing net-caught bass, Mevagissey has leapt from 34th place in 2016 to first place in 2018 and 2019.

I'm told commercial handliners are also angry about this too. How has this netting been allowed to spiral out of control? I think we'd all agree that Cornwall IFCA needs to find out why net-caught bass landings have gone up so dramatically in Mevagissey and do something about it. The future of the nation's future bass stock depends on it.

David Curtis, director of Save Our Sea Bass, is concerned about the silence from Cornwall IFCA and its lack of action. He said: "It seems Cornwall IFCA is clueless about landings in its own district. This is yet another item to add to the long list of Cornwall IFCA's failures."

He is urging anglers to hold Cornwall IFCA to account because, even if you don't fish in Cornwall, these are bass that won't make it to your area. I'd urge you to support David's call for anglers to send an email to Cornwall IFCA asking them why bass landings have gone up and to put this on the agenda of its meeting in September. David has made it easy for you to do this at saveourseabass.org. Read more on page 105 of this issue.



EXCITING FUTURE

It's a new era here at Sea Angler. The magazine and its associated digital platforms have been sold to Kelsey Media. Therefore, please take note of our new contact details. We're looking forward to an exciting future and growing the Sea Angler brand. I hope you'll continue to give us your loyal support and encourage fellow saltwater anglers to do the same.

I'm confident there is plenty of great shore and boat fishing coverage for you to enjoy in this issue. Spread the word among your friends.

Cliff Brown, editor

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Disappearing act!

Lincolnshire's beaches have been producing some of the best sport for many years, but when two local experts arrive for an early morning session, they were in for a rude awakening...

ANGLERS VISITING SHORE marks on the Holderness Coast and down into Lincolnshire have been enjoying some seriously incredible fishing recently. To put it bluntly, it's been hectic and off the scale in terms of success for many. The usual

species such as smoothhounds and bass have not only ventured inshore in huge numbers, they're even bigger.

Thornback and spotted rays have also been muscling in to provide variety and there's also been rumours of the odd stingray being landed. But for some anglers who are on the ball, experiencing hard-hitting bites followed by long powerful

runs, eventually resulting in strong hook snoods being bitten clean through, has seen them turning to using wire traces. Incredibly, this summer has seen more tope also feeding closer to the beach, and some are nudging a whopping 50lb. If you get your tactics wrong when these are around, don't expect to be connected for too long if one grabs your bait. ▶



England international George Smith blasts his peeler crab bait way out into the tide

ACTION-PACKED FISHING

Gone are the days of just turning up to a venue on sheer speculation. The internet has become a firm provider of up-to-date information for anglers, and none more so than social media.

My Facebook feed was stuffed with pictures of happy shore anglers, proudly showing off huge specimens. Many of the smoothhounds were into high double-figures, with the odd fish over the magical 20lb in weight. I even saw a huge, jaw-dropping hound proclaimed to be more than 23lb.

Feeding among the sharks have also been bass and I'm not talking merely just one or two fish either. Some anglers have caught as many as 20 fish in a single session, with lots of these spikey predators well into double figures. And then I came across images of large tope that had been beached, it was incredible to see.

I continued scrolling through pages upon pages of Facebook posts, mesmerised by what I was looking at and it was plain to see, this part of the east coast of the UK was certainly on top form.

It was at this point I stumbled across a post from Grimsby angler George Smith. He was holding a bass of over 10lb. As I continued reading, he explained that he caught it on his first cast, followed by a nine pounder and many more around 6lb. He'd also encountered an abundance of smoothhounds too. I don't think I can recall ever seeing such a session by a single angler. But when I read further on, he mentioned that every other angler on the beach was enjoying equally good sport. I needed to get in on the action and began forming a plan to have a session.

SENSE OF EXCITEMENT

A phone call to George resulted in a long conversation, during which I sensed the excitement in his voice as he explained just how good the fishing had been, and still is.

As he flicked through his tide book, we arranged to meet at Huttoft two days later. It meant an early morning start for us as low water was around 6am.

The Lincolnshire beaches aren't particularly far away from me here in Cambridgeshire where I live, roughly around 70 miles. But, with many of the roads being single lane, it's not uncommon to find myself sat behind an articulated lorry for much of the journey.

I arrived at 6.30am and as I walked on to the beach front promenade, I spotted two lone anglers already fishing right on the low water mark. George had been joined by another mate of ours, Simon Drayton, a match angler from Gainsborough.

Conditions couldn't have been any better with a cloudless, blue sky and a bright sun already rising high. There was plenty of colour in the water too, which is always a positive sign that there could be a few fish to be caught.

An hour into the flood and George had a walloping bite on the rod tip. Not a slow pull, or a tap tap, but a huge lunging hit that bent the tip right over, a classic bass hit. Sadly, and frustratingly, it failed to connect with the



Clumps of weed collected on the mainline on the flood



Simon Drayton with the first fish, a flounder

hook, which can often happen with bass, and it was gone.

The fishing was slow to say the least and as two hours turned into three hours, there were no bites. And, to make matters a little worse, the flooding tide brought with it a huge amount of weed. It was horrendous and reeling in was difficult with much of the

mainline covered in it.

After reeling in to change his bait, George removed the large clumps of weed onto the beach and revealed thousands of tiny crabs and shrimps among it. There was no doubt that there was a huge amount of feed out there to attract the fish. He clipped on another pre-baited rig and whacked it way



Above: George and Simon both use original Penn 525 Mag multiplier reels



Right: The top bait is peeler crab – here clipped behind a Breakaway Imp for casting

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out into the tide.

At last, the first fish emerged from the surf as Simon beached a nice flounder. Not quite what we were targeting, but welcome, nevertheless. George looked puzzled: "Four hours into the flood and it looks like the smoothhounds aren't around – or the bass," he said.

For weeks, months even, this beach had been on fire, producing lots of fish. However, today it seemed that the fish had done a disappearing act. I was disappointed but past experience has taught me that smoothhounds move around in packs and can arrive on the scene in an instant.

Suddenly, George had a proper drop-back, slackline bite. Was this the arrival of the hounds? As he slowly reeled in, the fish wasn't putting up too much of a fight, just enough to signal to him that he had a fish on the hook.

Eventually, the fish emerged on to the sand in a flash of silver. "It's a bass," he shouted. As we both made our way to the fish, George looked at me with a smile and said: "Hang on, it's not a bass!"

He was right as the forked tail and lack of spiked dorsal fin became a real giveaway. "Look at that, it's an Allis shad," he said.

It was huge too, possibly close to 2lb and easily the biggest I'd ever seen caught. These fish are protected and must be returned to the sea if caught. At this time of year, they head to the rivers and estuaries in preparation of their annual spawn and this one had succumbed to a peeler crab bait.

Excitement over, the shad was returned quickly, and George cast out another peeler crab bait that quickly resulted in a plump flounder. The hounds and bass were proving to be elusive.

It was almost high water and the signs weren't looking good, perhaps the ebb tide may be more productive? ▶

George caught this rare and protected Allis shad on a peeler crab bait



DETERMINED TO SUCCEED

As the sea slowly started retreating on the ebb, George reeled in his fifth lesser weaver of the session. It's easy to see why so many holidaymakers become victims of these tiny, venomous fish each summer. They like to bury themselves in the sand in shallow water, with only their black dorsal fin poking through the top. Paddling bare foot on an east coast sandy beach can indeed be perilous and hundreds of people end up in A&E every summer after stepping on one.

The weed had virtually gone with the ebb tide but still the bites and fish were scarce. We were nine hours into the session, and it was turning into a gruelling trip.

George and Simon are experienced matchmen and were by no means giving up. They were counting on their expertise and knowledge of the venue to search out a decent fish. However, occasionally, the fish are simply not there to be caught.

Just then, George had a bite. A pull down on the rod tip and he was in. A few moments later and a bass of around 2lb was safely at his feet, proving that if you don't give up, you can still find a feeding fish.

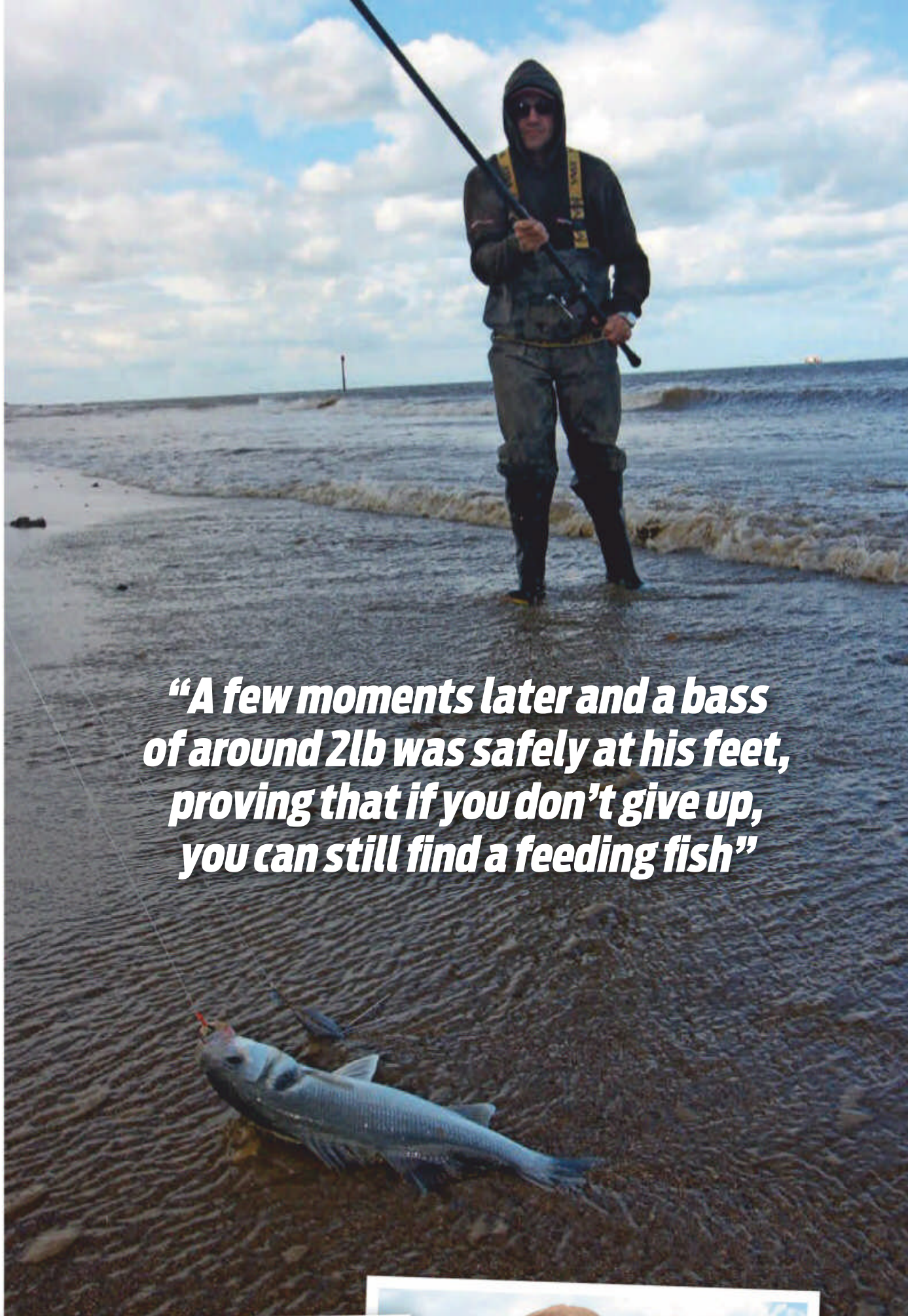
It was right on low water and a decision had to be made. The lads had been fishing a full 12 hours, my flask of coffee had been empty for two of them and I was shattered.

"They might come on the next flood tide into the evening," explained George. He was determined that the fish would eventually move in, but I know when I'm beat and said I was ready for home.

This all proves that fishing can be so unpredictable and even when the conditions are perfect, the fish just suddenly decide not to feed or move elsewhere.

That's the reason we keep on going fishing. When it's good, it's good, but when it's dismal, we know in just a few tides, the fish will return.

Looking at my Facebook feed a couple of days later, the fish did return, I guess we were just unlucky on this occasion. That's fishing. ■



"A few moments later and a bass of around 2lb was safely at his feet, proving that if you don't give up, you can still find a feeding fish"

Eventually George beached this bass after hours of effort



A flounder kept up George's spirits





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- 1 x X-RAP MAGNUM XPLODE 130
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Terms and conditions: Entries close at 23:59 on the 17/09/20 and the winners will be drawn on 18/09/20. Winners will be notified within 28 days of the close of entries. The draw is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entry is free. Open to residents of the UK aged over 18. Employees of Kelsey Media and their family members are not eligible to win. Only one entry permitted per person, no bulk entries will be accepted. There is no cash alternative and the prize is not transferable. If any prize or product is lost or damaged during the course of delivery to the recipient, Kelsey Media will provide reasonable assistance in seeking to resolve the problem. However, it will not always be possible to obtain replacements for lost or damaged goods, and in that event, no financial compensation would be payable by Kelsey Media or their affiliates. We reserve the right to cancel the competition, if circumstances change that are beyond our control. By entering you agree to be bound by all the rules and agree that your surname and county may be released if you win.



This is to...

Certify that

DONALD G. COOK

Holds the Record for
the Largest Specimen
SHORE CAUGHT BASS
taken on rod and line in
Wales and surrounding
Welsh territorial waters
at the date of capture

WEIGHT: **16lb 15oz 8 1/2 gm**

PLACE OF CAPTURE: **ABERTHAW**

DATE OF CAPTURE: **13 - 7 - 80**

Signed: *J. Gard* Chairman
Dick Elliott Secretary



History was made here

Forty years have passed since the Welsh bass record was broken by Don Cook. Now he recalls his epic catch and the whereabouts of the amazing fish



JULY 13TH 1980, A SUNDAY, WAS AN overcast and drizzly day in south-east Wales, with hardly a breath of wind, resulting in a slick calm on the murky, fast-flowing water of the Bristol Channel.

Thanks to a spring tide, it was the perfect day for collecting bait. A few hours finding crabs was initially all that Don Cook had intended as he loaded his old Hillman Avenger estate with bait bucket and boots, before heading west from his home near Barry to Aberthaw.

Don's plan was to gather a few dozen peelers for a session later that evening, when he'd fish over high water at another mark targeting bass. It was only as an afterthought that Don threw in an old rod and an Abu 8000 reel, along with a couple of lead weights and hooks that he carried in his jacket pockets, just in case.

BAIT SESSION

The tide was still well up when he arrived at Aberthaw to meet his regular bait collecting and fishing friend, Rob Crabb. As the water gradually receded to expose the myriad rock pools and weed beds that provide such rich pickings here for fish and fishermen, the pair got to work. Having eventually gathered sufficient bait for his evening session further along the coast, Don decided that as he had a rod with him, he might as well wet a line.

Following the concrete track that covers a pipeline leading from the seawall in front of the power station down to the low-water mark and beyond, Don made his way down towards the imposing twin concrete dome structures (now the long-disused cooling water outlets for the A power station). By now, they had been uncovered by the fast ebb tide.

Other anglers at the beach that day were grouped around the cooling water outlets for the B power station, which are located several hundred yards to the west. They were spinning, mostly with artificial sandeels, for school bass that used to swarm in the warm water at the outlets.

Setting himself up on a prominent rock located roughly midway between the two concrete domes, Don tied up a simple rig consisting of a size 4/0 hook positioned a couple of feet below the lead weight, which by necessity was attached via a rotten bottom. The ground at Aberthaw ranges from rough to extremely rough, and tackle losses are inevitable when fishing here. A rotten-bottom attachment helps minimise losses to only the lead weight.

Next, Don sifted through his bucket of freshly-gathered crabs and found a couple that were already dead. They would be long past their best by the evening tide, but were good enough for bait if used immediately. He bound these on to the hook using elastic thread and cast out. As he had not bothered to bring a rod-rest, he firmly jammed the rod in a cleft between two rocks and sat back to see what happened.

PERSISTENT BITE

By now it was two hours before low water and the tide was still ebbing hard. About ►

ten minutes after casting out, the rod tip started to rattle. He assumed it was a pouting worrying at the crab bait. Thinking it would take the small fish a while to work its way through two peeler crabs, he ignored the persistent bite.

Without warning, the tip of the rod slammed violently over and remained bent as Don removed the rod from its rocky rest. He could only watch as several yards of line disappeared out through the rod rings. With the tip of the rod thumping powerfully, he assumed that he had hooked a good conger eel, but after a few minutes of stalemate, the line started to cut against the tide – clearly, he had not hooked an eel.

He thought only a smoothhound could fight like that, so, fully relaxed, Don started to enjoy playing the fish, which now was swimming fast and alternating to the left and then the right. It was only when a huge tail fin broke the surface about 20 yards out that Don knew he had hooked the fish of a lifetime – a seriously large bass.

At that moment, enjoyment tuned to panic.

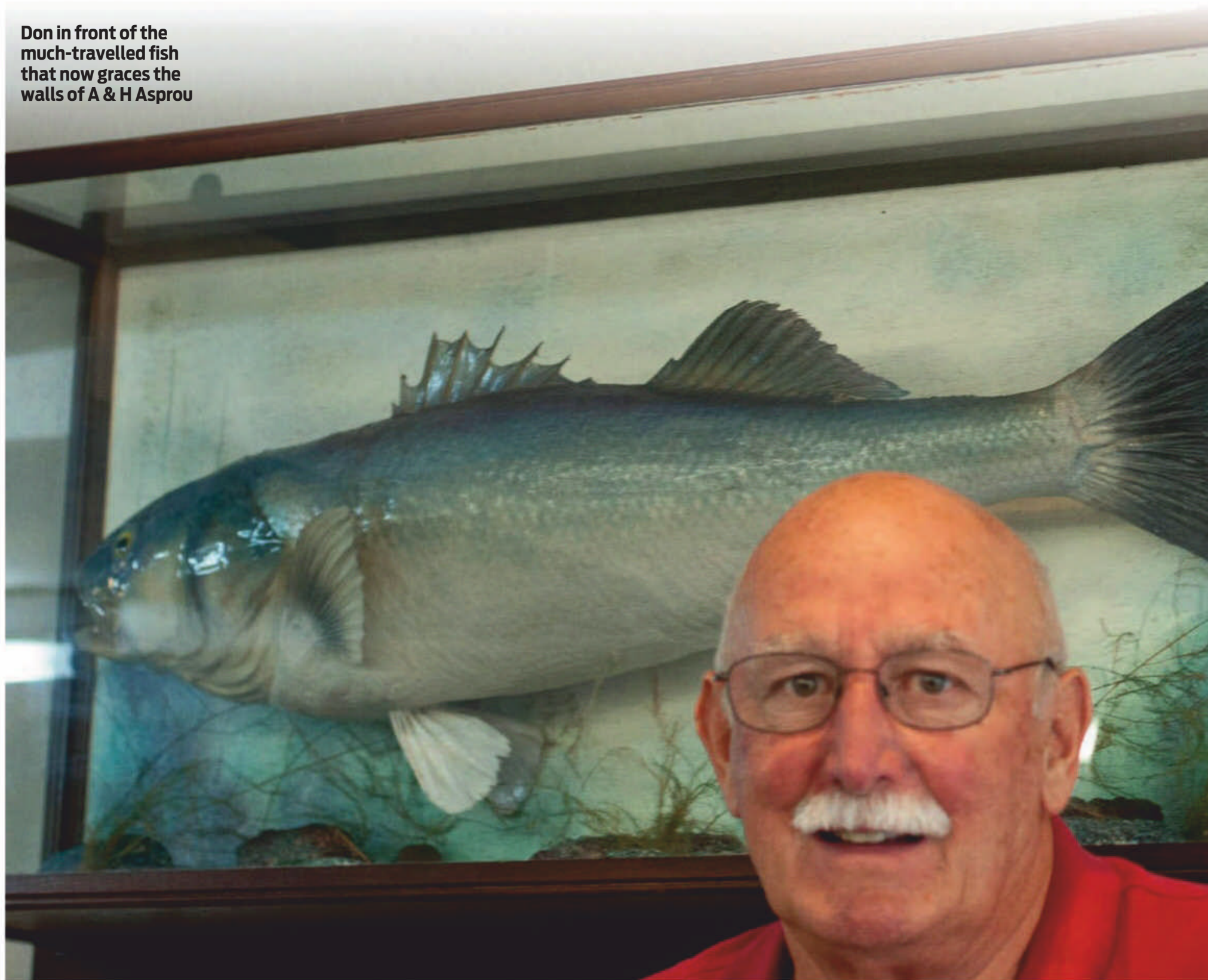


Don started to shout for Rob to help him, concerned that if he lost this fish nobody would believe the size of it. Thankfully, the sea was still quite flat, but a few gentle waves were pushing landwards and breaking gently over the rocky ledge, so eventually, Don had got his chance to beach the fish. When both the fish and the next shallow wave were

heading directly towards him, he pulled the fish up on to the ledge, where it was left high and dry when the wave receded.

Don rushed forward and grabbed his fish, but as he picked it up the hook fell out. Later examination revealed that the hook had been almost fully straightened, providing a very clear example that the difference

Don in front of the much-travelled fish that now graces the walls of A & H Asprou

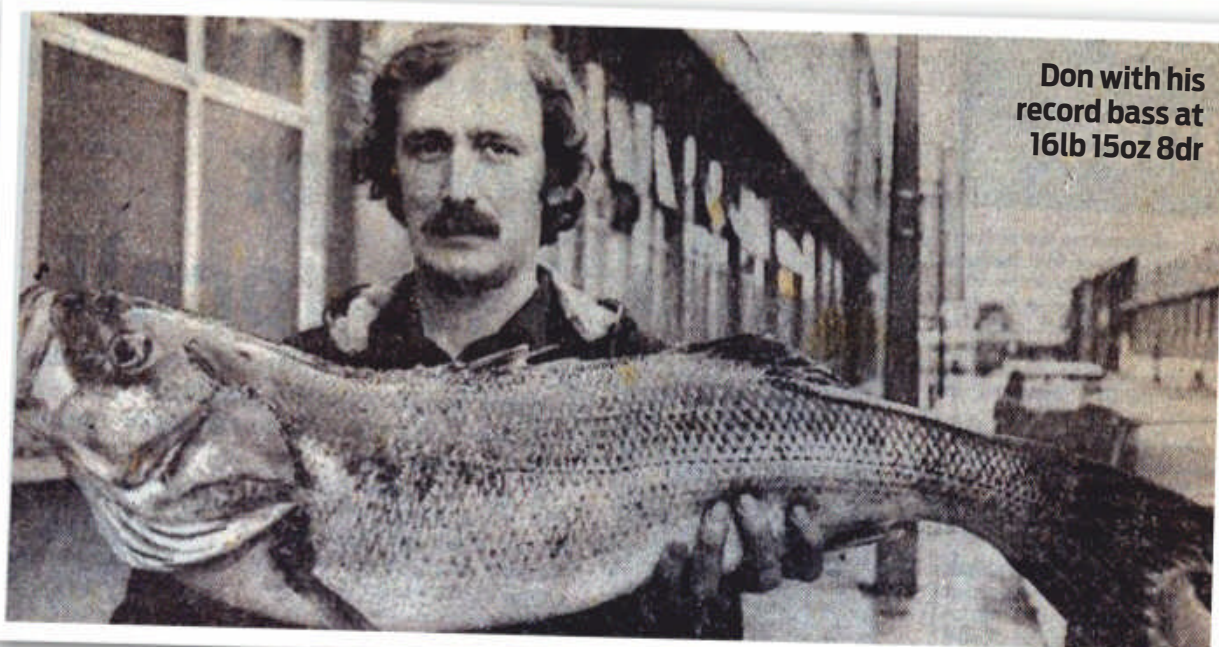


between success and failure in angling is a very fine one.

When it was first weighed, the bass had registered 17lb 3oz, but later at Bev's tackle shop, in Rhoose, now long gone, it registered slightly over 17lb, which beat the existing Welsh bass record by half a pound. After the scales were checked, when they were actually found to be weighing an ounce under the exact weight, the relevant information was submitted to the Welsh Record Fish Committee, which eventually agreed that it was indeed a new record. For some obscure reason it was listed at 16lb 15oz 8dr. At the time, it was the biggest bass that had been caught for many years from the British Isles.

ON THE MOVE

Forty years later I met up with Don at Aberthaw, the scene of his greatest angling triumph. Together we walked along the concrete path to that special spot, the exact same rock where all of those years ago Welsh angling history was made.



I asked Don what had happened to his fish. "For a long time it just lay in my freezer, then eventually I decided to have it professionally mounted by a taxidermist. That cost me around £100, which at the time was a lot of money. Afterwards the fish was displayed for several years at my local club, The West End Club, but after a few years the

premises underwent a revamp and the committee decided that it did not want a fish hanging on the wall.

"Next, my bass found its way to North Wales, where for many years it was displayed in Bangor at the tackle shop, B.A.S.S., run by Jeff Holmes. Then it returned to South Wales, where for a few more years it was stored in my garage, until I became concerned that it was starting to deteriorate."

Don decided to sell the fish. He put it into a specialist fishing tackle auction in Christchurch, Dorset, but bidding did not meet the reserve. That might have been the end of the saga, but a few days later Don was talking to keen sea angler Harry Asprou, who owns A & H Asprou Barbers in Holton Road, Barry.

"He told me that he would love to have the Welsh record bass on display at the shop, and that is where it hangs today, alongside the current British record mullet," said Don.

The 14lb 2oz 12dr mullet, taken by Ray Gifford in October 1979, was also caught at Aberthaw. Why not pop in and see these two magnificent fish?

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Today Don remains a keen bass angler and, to his credit, has caught another two double-figure bass, both from the shore at Aberthaw, and both on crab baits.

Our visit to this iconic venue was a trip down memory lane to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Don's fish, but (and you'd expect nothing less) Don and his friend Mark Cowell had come prepared with a bucket of prime peeler crabs.

As Don lobbed a double crab bait out to sea, the overcast sky, ebbing tide and brisk south-westerly wind creating a short chop suggested favourable conditions for an interesting evening's fishing. Unfortunately, the bass failed to show and the pair had to settle for the inevitable smoothhounds, along with a few strap conger eels.

Even though Don did not catch a bass, there was no hiding the contented smile on his face as at precisely two hours before low water he once again sat down on exactly the same rock as he had all of those years ago, and in his mind's eye relived the sight of the shovel-like tail of that truly amazing fish emerge from the water. History indeed. ■

"At the time, it was the biggest bass that had been caught for many years from the British Isles"





Unlocking the secrets

First light or dusk at the Keyhaven river mouth is the time for plenty of bass





FLOWING OUT INTO THE WESTERN Solent at the very tail end of the spit well past Hurst Castle, the mouth of the Keyhaven River in Hampshire has a reputation for producing some quality bass on both lures and baits. However, you only get a very short window of opportunity.

With boats constantly navigating the narrow entrance of the river and heading up to Keyhaven, sessions are really only viable at either first light or dusk when their activity is at a minimum. Tidal conditions must also be put into the equation because the bass are only active for a maximum of three hours – the last hour of the ebb and the first two hours of the flood.

During this period, they concentrate at the river entrance after vacating the many narrow and shallow creeks around the ▶

marshes while waiting to head back up the river with the young flooding tide. Ideally, you need the low-water period to coincide with either dawn or dusk for the chance of a bagging session.

With a light, warm northerly wind, along with low water around 8.30pm, followed by dusk at 9.30pm, conditions looked near perfect for my trip. After meeting my fishing buddy Steve Lawrence and parking at New Lane, I headed down the Milford shingle bank. From this area, which offers free roadside parking, it was a two-mile slog on shingle down to the end of the spit, which is about half a mile past Hurst Castle. Not a walk for the faint-hearted.

QUICK START

As usual, we lugged what seemed like a mountain of gear along the bank. It included our plugging kit and lighter beach tackle because most of the fishing would be at short range within 50 yards of the shoreline. When legering here, we use either ragworms or peeler crabs for bait, with the latter expected to do the business because they often peel in the surrounding marshes.

When targeting the bass along this stretch of the river entrance, running leger tactics will easily out-fish a more traditional paternoster trace. On this occasion we would be either plugging, which on occasions can produce some fantastic results, or using a running leger system. I opted for a 3oz plain lead fixed to a running leger boom sliding along my main leader and a 4ft hooklength armed with a size 1/0 Aberdeen hook. Casting is not an issue along this stretch, and even a lob of 30 yards is more than adequate.

Steve was the first to get a ragworm bait in the water while I was still slumped on the beach recovering from the hike along the bank with my tackle and camera gear.

Before I could even blink, Steve's rod tip was showing signs of life and within a couple of minutes the first small school bass lay at his feet. This was followed by another similar fish on his next cast. Twenty minutes later, just as



Only two of the bass came to peeler crabs



Some silver eels tried to destroy the rigs



Steve also caught some schoolies on a lure



Dan Austen caught 15 hounds nearby

I was getting my first bait in the water, Steve had a far better take. The culprit turned out to be a bass weighing just over the 3lb mark. They certainly give a far better account of themselves on a running leger and lighter rod.

Like Steve, I only had to wait a few minutes for my first take of the evening, which was from a lively little 2lb schoolie. This was followed by a constant stream of bass all caught in daylight at the start of the young flooding tide. With such hectic action it was a case of using one rod, especially when fishing a running leger. The initial take is different to that you get when using a traditional paternoster trace. Playing a fish is far more rewarding with a running leger because you have direct contact with the beastie, hence you can feel every twist and turn.

BIGGER FISH

As the light began to fade, the size of bass increased and we caught several topping 4lb. It was certainly an action-packed session and Steve probably took the honours for the evening's heaviest fish. He also took 10 minutes out to fish with a lure rod and was rewarded with a couple of small schoolies, which highlighted the venue's potential. Within the space of two hours we recorded 14 sizeable fish, which were all released, along with an equal number of smaller school bass.

With the final rays of light disappearing



Even a lob of 30 yards is more than adequate

over the horizon, the action just melted away as the bass headed back up the estuary with the flooding tide. We fished on for a short time but caught either silver eels, which were doing their best to destroy our rigs, or getting our hooks bitten off by spider crabs. It was time to call lines up.

Interestingly, we expect peeler crabs to be the most successful bait, but on this occasion ragworms, which are more readily available and cheaper, were far more productive. Of the sizeable bass caught, only two were taken on peeler crabs.

For those heading down to the river mouth, bass can be caught for most of the year, and only in January and February would you struggle, but during that period a few nice flounders can be expected.

Our return along the shingle was uneventful, except for watching Dan Austen, of Southampton, fishing midway along oa sandbar at Hurst land a near double-figure smoothhound, one of 15 he caught. There is little doubt that for those prepared to make the effort and don their hiking boots, our shoreline still offers some fantastic fishing. ■

Left: Ideally, you need the low-water period to coincide with either dawn or dusk for the chance of a bagging session

Below: As the light began to fade, the size of bass increased

NEED TO KNOW

GETTING THERE

■ Guarding the western entrance to the Solent, Hurst Castle is an easy venue to locate. There is free parking at New Lane. Travel light because it is a 40-minute hike from the parking area to the river entrance.



TACKLE SHOP

■ Loni's Angling, 119 Old Milton Road, New Milton, Hampshire, BH25 6DP, tel: 01435 616323.



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Kevin Crowley
and his first
painted ray

Rough house rays

Success is plucked from nature's grasp on a night when sane people were tucked up safe and sound in their homes

WE DIDN'T KNOW IT, BUT we couldn't have picked a worse week for bad weather. Hit with constant gales, severe flooding that saw roads awash, and unbelievably, at times, it got even worse, with winds to 60mph. It was rough-house fishing, to say the least!

Inland Fisheries Ireland fishery inspector Kevin Crowley and I were in the Dingle area of Ireland's County Kerry. On our hit-list were small-eyed rays, which Irish anglers call painted rays. Their beige-coloured back is patterned with creamy white lines, and often the wing edges can be shaded a faint orange to a deep red that makes for a very pretty fish. They are also one of the better fighting rays too, especially in the surf.

As for the ideal conditions for them, then the textbooks recommend a gentle to moderate surf, and a light onshore wind. Due to the screaming winds and wild surfs, we put the painted rays on the back burner in the hope of maybe better conditions arriving later in the week.

Painted rays are basically a southern species with localised populations in the UK and Ireland. Kerry's Tralee Bay is a particularly good spot. The best fishing is from August onwards, with September, October and November good months to try the surf, and also the time to catch fish over the Irish 10lb specimen qualifying weight.

HUGE SURF

These rays like open beaches with some nearby inflow of freshwater, such as an estuary, and on all beaches they are often very close to where a small stream flows across the beach. It is definitely worth looking for areas of small stones that break up otherwise featureless sand.

We'd earmarked Fermoy, just to the west of Castlegregory, with its little stream running down the beach as our best bet given



the appalling weather, but to get a try at this beach we had to wait until the savage wind went south-west, putting it over our backs.

After a four-day wait, we arrived in darkness to fish the ebbing tide. The wind was a constant 35mph and gusting to perhaps 50mph, almost blowing us over as the heavy rain squalls came blasting through.

Standing where the access path meets the beach, we were confronted by one of the biggest surfs I've ever fished. It was huge, pounding, and the roar deafening. It was breaking up to six feet or more, and each wave wore a plume of white foam that whipped back off the top into the sea.

I questioned our sanity. To his credit, Kevin buoyed me up with a "There'll be fish in it. Come on, let's give it a try." That statement proves the point of fishing as a team and pushing each other on.

SIMPLE RIG

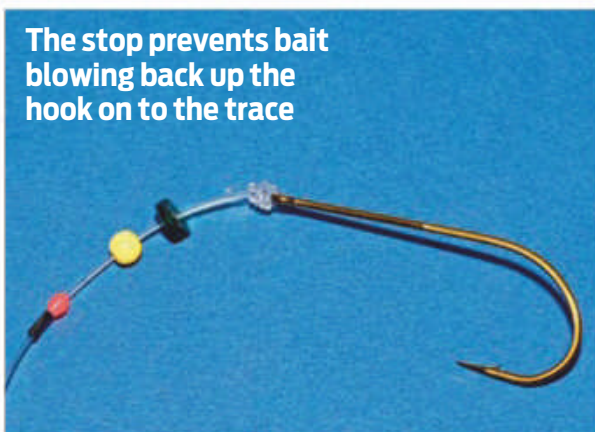
Our rigs were simple, straight-through 60lb pulleys armed with a size 3/0 Mustad Viking hook. I had, though, back at the cottage, shortened the hooklength more than usual to 15 inches in an effort to stop the bait

churning about in the wave action. I wanted to make it easier for the fish to intercept the bait in the turbulent sea. In conditions like this when very long powerful casts are needed, it's important to have a fixed bait stop above the hook.

When using 60lb mono straight through for the pulley rig, I slide on a normal rig crimp, then a 5mm bead followed by three or four large sequins, then the hook. Multiple sequins will not flex, and form a solid unforgiving base with the bead and crimp for the bait to butt up against during the initial release phase of the rod. The bait stop prevents the bait blowing back up above the hook, but also maintains bait security while the bait is in flight and as it hits the sea's surface before it releases from the bait clip. Being able to cast far enough is of little use if the bait does not reach that distance in one piece and the hook is still positioned on the bait clip.

Given the strength of the wind, even though the surf was ridiculous, I stuck with a 5oz lead weight, rather than 6oz, but one with longer grip wires than normal. I added a rubber band around the lead to really tighten the wires, making it almost a fixed-wire version to get

The stop prevents bait blowing back up the hook on to the trace



Elastic bands give the long-wired leads extra grip



Mustad Viking in size 3/0 are big enough





Penn 525 Mag3
– ideal for rough
conditons



Low
diameter
but strong
22lb line



**60lb mono for
shockleaders
and rig bodies**



**Successfully
returning a ray**

better grip. My idea was that the lighter lead, when hit at a high trajectory, would stay in the air that little bit longer when pushed on by the wind, and therefore get me further out into deeper water.

My reel was a Penn 525 Mag3, which was loaded with 22lb line – strong enough to haul weed and a fish but of a suitably low diameter to aid the lead weight to stay aloft for the maximum time. It was a balance between distance and anchoring the bait to combat the raging surf.

Just about anywhere you go, two baits stand out for painted rays. A sandeel is top of the list, with squid a good second choice. Our sandeels were big, fat, round-bodied launce, so we used three-inch body sections secured with bait elastic. The smaller baits had plenty of smell. Being less bulky, they would fly further due to less air resistance, as we both felt distance would be the key.

Normal baits would be a whole medium-sized sandeel with the hook threaded down the body from the tail and out through the head end, then secured with bait elastic.

PAIN FOR GAIN

The surge of the waves was up to 100 yards, so it was a case of following it out, wading sensibly as far as we could within safety bounds, hammering the cast out, then quickly trotting back before the returning surge caught up with us.

I remember looking down at a virtually empty reel spool with the surge still around my knees, even though I'd heavily loaded it

with line expecting this would be an issue.

We had to hold the rod high, too, and ignore the eventual back and arm pain, consciously feeling for the slightest indication of something that might be a bite, while leaving the rest of our gear and rod-rest well above the limit of the surge. Although there was some weed, we could cope with it.

Two or three casts in, I felt a bump on the rod tip, then another. I can't say the small school bass hammered the rod tip over, but I struck into it, eventually beaching the fish on the wave surge. It was the boost our morale needed. There were fish out there.

HARD-WON FISH

The tide now ebbing, I had an obvious bite that tugged the rod tip down – another greedy schoolie. I rebaited, walked out into the surge, and got a good cast away. It was pitch black and we heard the wind rising again and the incessant hissing noise of torrential rain and even hail on sand approaching as the next violent squall bore down on us.

I glanced to my right where Kev's headlight, some 50 yards away, should have been visible, but all I could see was blackness. Right in the middle of this I felt the line tension drop on the rod tip. Reluctant to move due to the rain, and figuring it was only weed, I wound down to tighten the line, fearing the worst. Whatever was out there had moved left against the tide and quickly created 20 yards of slack. I wound like crazy until I felt its weight, then leaned back into it. It kicked back, went slack again, and I gained a bit more line.

The fish responded by running again, now with the tide and parallel to me. This is how it was for two or three minutes, the fish swimming through the surf, sometimes feeling light as a wave pushed it forward, then going heavy as the wave surged over it.

The fish made two more good runs in the edge of the surf, then, drawing it a bit closer with the surge, I saw the fish's wings break the surface. As my suspicions of a ray were confirmed, Kevin had realised what was afoot and was now in front of me.

Lifting the fish up for a first glance, this painted ray felt heavy, but there was no way we were going to weigh it accurately in these wild conditions, even if we wanted to do so. We agreed it was somewhere around 7lb. The fish, hard-won in horrible conditions, was released on an outgoing wave.

The tide was about two hours down now and the rain had eased to a steady downpour in between squalls. The wind abated slightly to a steady Force 8 coming straight down the narrow valley of the Connor Pass immediately behind us.

I watched Kevin's headlight move out into the surf, swing towards me then away again as he made a long cast. He worked his way back, me only conscious of his now rock-steady light source. I glanced back to the surf, marvelling at its ferocity as each wave peeled back on itself in a crown of white.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw Kevin's headlight slowly moving towards the sea. Putting my headlight beam on him, I saw he was into a fish that was pulling well. I wound



A sandeel or section of launce is top of the bait list

in my own gear and walked out towards him to give moral and physical support.

The fish was pulling hard and, characteristically, moving parallel with the surf, but there was no head shaking, so we knew it was another ray. It was a dogged battle, a little line given occasionally, but more coming back to the reel. I trained my headlight on the surf trying to follow the run of the line. We knew the fish was near.

As the surge retreated, I saw the wings and made a beeline for the fish putting me between it and the breakers, just in case the hook popped free. Kevin drew it in and lifted his prize for a proper look. Another ray about the same size or a little bigger, and I think his very first painted variety. A deep-bodied fish in prime condition, it had the hook neatly lodged in the upper jaw.

Two nice rays and victory plucked from nature's grasp on a night when sane people were tucked up safe and sound in their homes.

PERSEVERANCE PAYS

Our adventure highlighted several important points about angling.

Firstly, to persevere with your fishing when expectations are low and conditions worse than grim because it might pay off. Secondly, to balance your rig to the relevant conditions, such as using a shorter hooklength combined with the tightly fixed grip wires to keep the bait tight to the seabed in the massive surf. That allowed the rays to find it, which proved vitally important, I feel, on the night.

What's more we had debunked the

A lovely example of a painted ray



accepted theory that you need a calmish sea and a reasonably small steady surf to catch a painted ray.

During that autumnal period, I can think of few other areas that really compare with the Castlegregory beaches for the consistent numbers and overall size of the painted rays present. It's now on my list to return one autumn in the near future and have a proper short campaign targeting one of those specimen 10-pounders. ■

NEED TO KNOW

■ Accommodation:
Tourism Ireland
– www.ireland.com/en-gb/accommodation

■ Fishing
information: www.fishinginireland.info

■ Travel: Ferry
(Holyhead or Fishguard) –
www.stenaline.co.uk

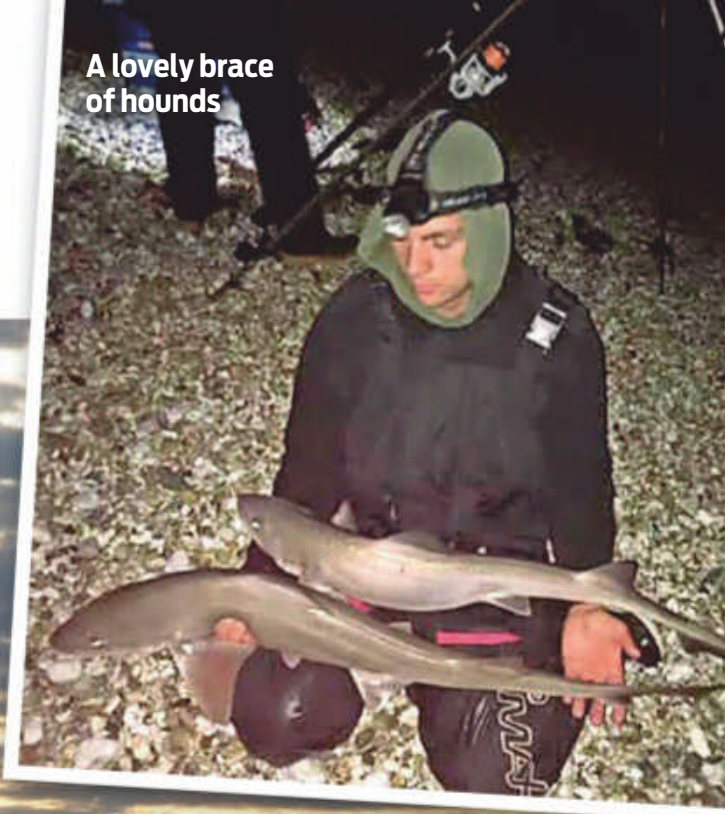


SPOTLIGHT ON

Pagham

South Coast angler and TronixFishing ambassador Dan Middleton highlights one of his favourite marks

A lovely brace
of hounds



LIVING ONLY A SHORT DISTANCE from Viscount Beach at Pagham means I can fish it at short notice when the tides are right for any particular species.

In more than 10 years of fishing trips to this West Sussex venue, I've had some good sessions and, of course, some bad ones.

First time I fished it, I blanked. I remember the day like it was yesterday because I must have found every snag on the beach, even after moving to different spots.

A few sessions later and a few dog walks at low tide gave me an idea of where to start fishing. As the months and years progressed, I gained more knowledge from other local anglers and certainly improved my catches.

Now I only fish tides of five metres and above at Viscount. I've had brilliant success on big tides, such as 5.4 or 5.7 and even 6.3. We don't get a lot of sixes, but when we do you can bet your bottom dollar I'll be out fishing somewhere.

Located to the east of Selsey, Pagham has several shallow beaches that have been known for their smoothhounds and black bream in summer, along with cod and rays in the winter. Things have changed a bit over

the years due to storm damage so the beaches now have a lot of fresh shingle, which did alter the fishing.

TIME & TACTICS

At Viscount Beach, I usually fish three hours up and two hours down. Big tides seem to produce the bigger rays and bass, and even hounds at the right time of year. I've had smuts to 13lb 8oz.

When I target the bigger fish on large tides, I use either Pennell pulley or fixed Pennell rigs, with the rig body and hooklength both about 3ft long. A 20-25lb hook snood with size 4/0 Sakuma hooks and a breakout lead weight work a treat and get some good distance, even in horrible conditions.

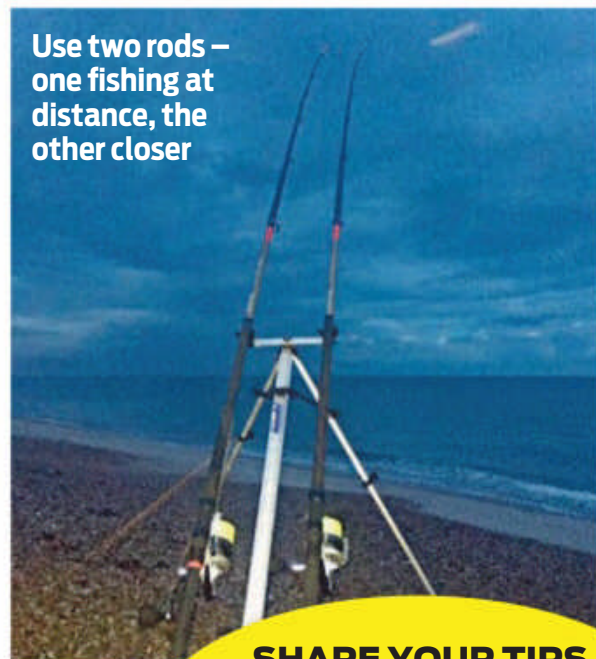
If I'm fishing for small fish, such as dogfish, pouting, flounders, soles and whiting, I use two or three-hook flapper rigs. It doesn't matter if they are clipped down or not with smaller hooks.

To tackle Viscount properly, I recommend using two rods, with one at distance and the other closer in, which covers more water and helps to find some fish. This way I find them in half the time and, hopefully, increase my catch rate. It's worth remembering that there are some weed beds, but the snags are at their

worst when fishing at distance.

You should always take your time with bait presentation. I've found a few baits that always work here, even during daylight, for rays, bass, hounds, codling, dogfish and many more. Mackerel is a great bait for dogfish and rays, while Bluey and sandeels presented on a size 4/0 hook are great for rays. I would never go fishing without Bluey now if the rays are present. A good bait is a peeler

Use two rods –
one fishing at
distance, the
other closer



SHARE YOUR TIPS
Tell us about your local mark
Send your advice and photos to
cliff.brown@kelsey.co.uk



Another decent smoothie

Right: Big tides seem to produce the bigger rays



The beach near the harbour entrance

crab or a hermit crab for hounds. If I'm targeting cod, I use black lug and squid. I've found no difference in dirty or washed squid.

TRY THESE

Other nearby venues are Church Norton, Pagham Harbour entrance, the yacht club, Barrack Lane and Aldwick.

Church Norton is a shallow beach of mud, shingle and sand, with the main spit and a deep gully to the right. It gets weedy on spring tides. The harbour entrance is good for bass and mullet, but is a long walk from the yacht club. Bigger tides are best at the yacht club, but weed is a problem after a big easterly wind. Black bream are caught here in summer.

Barrack Lane is a shallow sandy beach to its west, with clay ledges and rocky areas to the east. Fish high water because the mark is shallow at low tide. Aldwick is also sandy and shallow with groynes and rocks.

If you try these tips, study the beach and do your homework, you should increase your

catch rate. I remember a session at Viscount that produced loads of dogfish, three rays into double figures and a 4lb bass. High tide was at midnight and there was a 5.7 metre tide, with the wind south-westerly. I fished sandeel and Bluey cocktails at range, but the bass was caught about 50yds out on my second rod. ■

NEED TO KNOW

GETTING THERE

Pagham is located south of Chichester at the western end of Bognor Regis. Take the B2166 from Chichester to Aldwick. Viscount Beach is between Aldwick and Pagham at Viscount Drive, PO21 4PE.



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YOUR FISHING

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TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Stunning fishing for porbeagle sharks amazes skipper and charter anglers

WHAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A charter trip of a lifetime produced eight porbeagle sharks to 243lb.

The big fish (right) fell to Paul Mailman, of Brixham, Devon, while fishing 60 miles offshore from Minehead, Somerset. The same trip produced porbeagles of 88lb and 80lb for Harry Temple, of Newton Abbott.

"On the first day we went to look for porbeagle and blue sharks. We had a three-hour steam out to the mark around 60 miles offshore," said Harry. "Within 15 minutes of arriving at the mark we got the chum going and, boom!, there were sharks around the boat. We fished all day and eight porbeagles were boated and released."

"The skipper (Michael Webber, of Teddie Boy) and a guy who fished with us, who had been on over 100 sharking trips, had never seen so many porbeagle sharks before. We normally see one or two and the rest will be blue sharks," said Harry.



■ Six anglers from Burnham Boat Owners SAC caught 26 blue sharks to 105lb during a charter trip on Lokie Adventures, skippered by Kieran Faisey, out of Penzance, Cornwall.

The big blue fell to Jed Strick (above), while Anthony Georgiou caught another of 95lb. The trip produced many fish weighing more than 70lb, with Aaron Orr, Martin Quinn, Chris Ellis and Sean Haley sharing the action.

1,000 venues to try in Wales

■ Working in collaboration with angling clubs, anglers, leading writers and influencers, the new Fishing in Wales website includes key information on where, how and when to fish in the Principality.

Every place to fish in Wales has been covered, with more than 1,000 fishing locations detailed for sea, game and coarse anglers.

A collective of 18 contributors, including Sea Angler's Dave Lewis, will be writing for the site and taking part in the videos.

Find it here: www.fishingwales.net



TRY WALES FOR TOPE



Having caught a personal best tope of 25lb, a week later Llifon Fretwell (above) went even better with a 40lb 1oz fish during a shore session on Anglesey.

The angler from Llanberis, North Wales, who was fishing at Ty Croes, caught it within five minutes of making his first cast. He fished a pulley rig baited with a whole mackerel.

"I hooked up to something big and it took me 15 minutes to see what was on. I got it in with help of my mate Shane Jones. It was a big tope weighing in at 40lb 1oz and the fish of the year for me. I'm over the moon."

There was a 38lb tope for Paul Tucker, of Hoylake, Wirral, who fished a North Wales shore mark. "I have had plenty of tope over the years from the rocks, but



from the shore has been difficult until now," said Paul (pictured above), who fished a Pennell rig with size 6/0 circle hooks baited with a joey mackerel.

How about this for an amazing catch too? Seven-year-old Ollie Brinn (pictured below) landed this cracking tope from a mark in Pembrokeshire. The lad from Pembroke Dock, who was fishing with dad Dean, caught it on a frozen joey mackerel on a pulley rig with 150lb rig body and 110lb wire trace and size 8/0 hook.



HOUND FISHING ON FIRE



Dayle Anderson

Yorkshire's Holderness Coast is producing huge smoothhounds close to the British record of 23lb 3oz.

Biggest reported was a 23lb hound, only three ounces under the British record, for Glen Devine, who caught the fish, pictured on page 34, on a Pennell pulley rig with a 40lb hooklength and size 3/0 hooks baited with shrimps.

Glen was fishing at Withernsea, East Yorks, where he used a Zziplex M4GT rod paired with an Akios Nitron F15 reel loaded with 15lb Ultima F1 line.

At nearby Aldbrough, a short session after work produced a stunning 21lb 2oz smoothhound for Dayle Anderson. The angler from Skirlaugh used a Pennell pulley rig with size 4/0 and 2/0 hooks baited with a peeler crab. He was beginning to pack away his gear when he got the bite. As it was about to be landed, the hook broke, but his pal Pete Staples and brother-in-law Nic Weatherstone managed to grab the fish before it swan off. He was fishing with a Century T900 rod and Emblem Surf 45 fixed-spool reel.



Jay Pickup

On the South Coast, Karl Brett fished in rough conditions at Selsey, West Sussex, but his efforts paid off with a personal best smut weighing 19lb 12oz. He fished a pulley dropper with rag and squid.

At the Bristol Channel, Dave Rowson, of Taunton, caught four smoothhounds to 17lb 4oz at Watchet harbour wall in Somerset, while fishing three hours before high tide. He fished ragworms tipped with squid on Pennell rigs with size 5/0 hooks.

"I lost three because I was fishing with two rods and both were going at the same time," he said.

Over in South Wales, Tom England, of Tonypany, was back at Newton Point, Porthcawl, seeking smoothhounds and caught a new personal best of 14lb 4oz. He fished a short Pennell pulley rig baited with a peeler crab.

At the entrance to the River Mersey, the sport has been hectic at New Brighton. Among many anglers getting good results are Jay Pickup, of Wallasey, and his pal Steven Moffatt, who caught 17 hounds on peeler crabs.



Dave Rowson



Tom England



Karl Brett



Steve Moffatt



■ Darren Golden, of Plymouth, used a half mackerel bait on a running leger rig to catch a 36lb tope, while fishing on a private boat out of the Devon port. It was the biggest of three he caught.



■ A superb smoothhound of 25lb 8oz fell to a boat angler fishing in the Thames Estuary. David Goodwin (above), from Southend, Essex, who was on his cousin's boat, based at Wallasea Island, fished half a fresh mackerel on a running leger rig.

Another small-boat angler, Ken Collins (below), of Crawley, caught a 22-pounder while fishing out of Eastbourne, East Sussex.



■ Lance Edwards landed this 28lb 10oz conger eel during a shore session at Minehead. He fished a Pennell pulley rig with size 5/0 hook baited with mackerel.



Every little helps

Achieving a fishing goal is what matters rather than the size of the fish, says reader Danny Carter



**BEEN THERE,
CAUGHT THIS!**
The best fishing stories
from our readers



B EING FAIRLY NEW TO SEA angling, I've found it a struggle to choose what to target and when to do so. It means I usually select a species and put out messages on social media seeking basic information, but preferring to learn as much as possible on my own.

My main dilemma has been picking what to target. Recently, I've had some company on my fishing trips, having been joined by two friends, Jordan Lockyear and Lee Beadman. These guys, who are from Poole too, are also new to sea fishing. Instead of thinking about what to target, I asked them what they wanted to catch. We settled on smoothhounds.

I'd never set out to catch hounds before, but I've caught a few tiny pups, though never by design. There was no need to ask if they were possible to catch in summer because I had seen pictures all over my social media feeds.

FIRST ATTEMPTS

Target decided, it was time to prepare. I showed the guys how to tie a basic pulley rig, using an 80lb rig body, 40lb hooklength and a pair of size 3/0 crab hooks. We'd be using peeler crabs for bait. The way I bait a peeler crab is to cut two thirds of the way through from front to back, open the crab out so it is long and straight and then bind it to the hooks with bait elastic, making sure to keep the hook points visible.

I had no marks in mind, so picked somewhere I had accidentally caught them before – Branksome Chine, which is to the



A small bass from the first trip

west of Bournemouth. My reasoning was that if I could catch them without trying, then I should get one when I did try. However, there is never any guarantees in fishing and our first few trips were fairly unsuccessful other than dogfish, small bass and strap congers.

On the third trip, I got excited when I had a good bite followed by a slack line. I wound down as fast as I could and was greeted by a fair bit of weight, some head shaking and a fish swimming off to the left. After a few minutes I landed an enormous ball of weed and a 11lb bass. My initial elation had been cruelly crushed.

REVISED PLAN

After this session, the fishing trio became a duo because Jordan had to return to work. As I discussed with Lee how to turn our fortunes around, it hit me that perhaps we were using the wrong bait. I knew that peelers were highly rated for hounds, but in the past, when I was not targeting them, I was using ragworms when fishing for plaice or soles. Ragworms it would be.

It was now time to tie some loop rigs. The original plan was to have a crab hook on the



Kieran, was thrilled with this sole

Lee Beadman with a hound of 21b 9oz



bottom and a size 2 on the top because we thought we could use both baits. However, we felt that we were complicating things and went with size 2 Kamasan hooks on both snoods.

With our new plan devised, off we went back to the beach. This time we were accompanied by my 10-year-old son Kieran, who was keen to land a sole. He had seen pictures of what I had been catching on the venue before I switched my attention to the hounds. I set him up a simple three-hook flapper rig and he baited his hooks with ragworms.

I was the first person into a fish with a small black bream on the top snood, then on the second cast I had a sole and a plaice before the fishing slowed for me. Lee hooked the target fish, a little hound of 21lb 9oz. After going a few hours without a bite, that was the incentive I needed to get a fresh bait on and blast it out into the surf. With my enthusiasm renewed, I kept going, but to no avail.

Soon it was time to reel in and head home. Kieran was ecstatic though when he retrieved his rig to find a 9oz sole on his bottom snood.

BACK FOR MORE...

Two nights later and on the eve of my birthday, the next session started the same as the last when I caught a black bream on my first cast, followed by a small plaice. Lee had a small sole on his second cast. While it was nice to be catching fish, I wanted a hound.

Once again, the fishing slowed for a few hours until Lee's rod was nearly pulled off its tripod and he wound in a hound, a little smaller than the one he'd caught during the previous session. As much as I was happy for him, I was

feeling disappointed that I couldn't achieve my goal.

I waded out to release Lee's fish, happy to see it swim off fighting fit, but I felt a little deflated. As I turned to return to my tripod, my right-hand rod pulled over slowly, the type of thing you see when the line picks up a lump of weed. By this point I was feeling crushed and picked up the rod to retrieve the weed, but was met with quite a bit of weight.

I wondered how I had managed to pick up so much weed when all evening the

water seemed completely devoid of it. When my line was halfway back, I noticed it was going off to the left, yet the tide was running to the right. Yes! I allowed myself a small smile.

I played the fish carefully, but once it was in Lee's hands, I could barely contain my excitement. It was only 3lb 11oz, but it was achieving my goal that mattered.

At this point I noticed the time was 12.15am and that meant the fish was not only my personal best, but also a birthday present. ■



**BEEN THERE,
CAUGHT THIS!**
The best fishing stories
from our readers



A weekend to



Freddie's is all smiles with this hound



Alfie with
his superb
hound
weighing
13lb 2oz,
a personal
best as well



remember

There's nothing quite like taking your kids fishing, as reader Mike Lelliott reports...



Sport was hectic, with Alfie beating me by five hounds to four

AFTER REPORTS OF GOOD numbers of smoothhounds and some stingrays being caught on our local beaches in West Sussex, I decided to take my 12-year-old son Alfie for a Friday night fishing session near our home at Bognor Regis.

With high water at 6.30pm, we headed to our venue at around 4.30pm. Both being keen to devote some time to targeting colossal stingrays, we soon had large ragworm baits deployed at various ranges. We sat back and stared at our rod tips and hoped for that elusive pull down. Unfortunately, high water came and went with nothing to show for it. The tide was dropping rapidly, which is normally the time to end the session.

However, in an effort to actually catch something, we decided to fish into darkness. Having each packed up one of the heavier set-ups, I got my Trabucco Supanova 4.7 out of the bag and Alfie opted for his Yuki Saiko A6. We were both fishing with 16lb braid, tapered leaders and two-hook flappers loaded with size 2 Saltwater Champions and single ragworm baits at around 60 yards.

As we wondered when our first fish would appear, Alfie's rod slammed over. Jumping into action, he played what showed all the signs of being our first hound of the evening. With our headlights focused on the dirty inshore water, several minutes later we got the first sight of the hound's fin as it travelled along the shoreline. As I grabbed its tail, a little voice from behind me cried out "Get in there" as he realised it was probably his personal best... and so it proved at 7lb.

Soon after releasing his fish, my Supanova bent forward and line stripped from the reel. After a spirited fight I landed a fish of around the same size. That was the signal to switch to size 3/0 up-and-over pulley rigs baited with squid. Sport was hectic from then on, with Alfie beating me by five fish to four. At 1am, we decided to give it one more cast.

Before we could retrieve our rigs, Alfie's reel screamed as line was stripped from it. We made our way down to the shoreline with the youngster determined that he would land what appeared to be a much better fish. Five minutes later his line crossed in front of us as the fish made another bid for freedom, but a determined young man steered the large fin into where I was waiting to beach his prize. His face was a picture when I handed him his new personal best, a superb smoothhound weighing 13lb 2oz. As the happy 12-year-old carefully released the catch and watched it swim away into the darkness, we ended the session, but knew we'd return.

BACK FOR MORE

Still armed with a little bit of bait remaining from our previous night's fun on the Sussex shingle, we decided to try again for the stingers. This time we were joined by my youngest lad, 10-year-old Freddie, who wanted a piece of the action.

Alfie and me headed out first, with his brother and my wife following after we had decided on a venue, which would still be at Bognor. ►

The lads check out dad's stingray



Freddie's first-ever shore stinger, which weighed 18lb

We stopped to look at a different venue, but the conditions were far from perfect for the elusive stingray. We were torn on whether to stay or return to the scene of the previous night's success. In the end it was decided on the toss of a coin – heads we stay, tails we move. The chosen 50p coin landed on heads so we unloaded the van and hit the beach.

With a brisk onshore breeze, dirty water and only fish and squid baits remaining, the odds were stacked against us. The rigs were up-and-over pulleys on 50lb snoods, this time with a single 3/0 hook rather than the usual Pennell due to the size of the mouth of the stingray. Small squid and mackerel baits were carefully cut and whipped on ready to be deployed.

The tackle for this adventure was beefed up a bit due to the potential size of these brutes. I opted for my pair of Century Tip Tornado rods and Daiwa Saltist BG reels loaded with 30lb Trabucco line and tapered leader, while Alfie used a Tronixpro Cobra GT2. I set up a Trabucco Impera for Freddie.

With the first baits prepped and hanging under the rod tips, my wife and Freddie arrived. With the barbecue heating nicely, we cast out the first baits at a variety of ranges and sat back again watching in anticipation.

A few hamburgers and hotdogs later and with no interest from any fish, all three of us retrieved our untouched rigs, put on fresh bait and cast out again.

Twenty minutes into the second cast, I was kneeling in front of my rods showing the boys some different aspects of the rigs, when I heard a slow clicking and saw line being peeled from my reel. I jumped up, grabbed my rod and tightened down to what felt like a small car heading out to sea. All of a sudden, the nerves kicked in because I sensed I had hooked our target.

HEART IN MOUTH TIME

I managed to stop the fish about 100 yards from shore and turned it. The weight and power of it was incredible and nothing like I'd ever experienced from the shore. Ten minutes into the tussle, the brute surfaced about 20 yards out and decided to completely change the fight. My heart was in my mouth as, this time, it swam east to west.

With an audience gathering, the pressure was on, particularly in the building swell. Landing this fish was tricky. Alfie took over on the rod and, with a towel in one hand to eliminate the danger of its wildly flailing tail, I nervously picked my time to land the beauty.

Once ashore, I didn't have time to relax because I needed to unhook, weigh and photograph the fish and make sure it was returned without delay. After some photographs, I released her back to the murky water and watched her swim off. I took some time out have a cup of tea and reflect on what had just happened. At 37lb, it was my personal

best stinger by 30lb and the experience was an something I'll never forget. To do it with the whole family present made it all the better.

As I sat reflecting on my catch, I noticed a shudder on Freddie's rod tip that never developed. With new-found enthusiasm both boys were keen get fresh baits out and fish hard for one of those incredible creatures. As Freddie picked up his rod to retrieve his rig, I noticed him lean into some serious weight. Because he was 10 years old and using a 4.5-metre rod, I thought all the effort was due to a snagged lead weight. As I got up to him to help out, I noticed line beginning to peel from his reel and head out to sea. It was evident he had hooked our target species too.

Freddie's Continental rod was pushed to its limits, but he began to win the battle, although it was a very different fight to the previous fish. He stayed on the rod as the leader knot came on to the reel and a slightly smaller stingray washed up at my feet. Following every precaution, we ensured the quick release of Freddie's first shore stinger, which weighed 18lb. With the fish released, the family mood was unforgettable and a memory that we will never forget.

The evening progressed with some fantastic fishing for hounds. Alfie, who had tried everything to catch his first stinger, bagged up on them, while a tired young Freddie added his first shore-caught hound, weighing 10lb. It was certainly a weekend to remember. ■

HOT SPORT FOR COMMON SKATE

Five common skate, each weighing more than 100lb, and a 25lb cod were boated by four anglers fishing off the Shetland Islands.

Biggest of the bunch was a fish that was too big to weigh, although it was estimated at 174lb. It was 82 inches long with a wingspan of 83 inches. It fell to Nathan Johnson, of Whiteness, who was skippering a private boat fishing off the small settlement of Sumburgh.

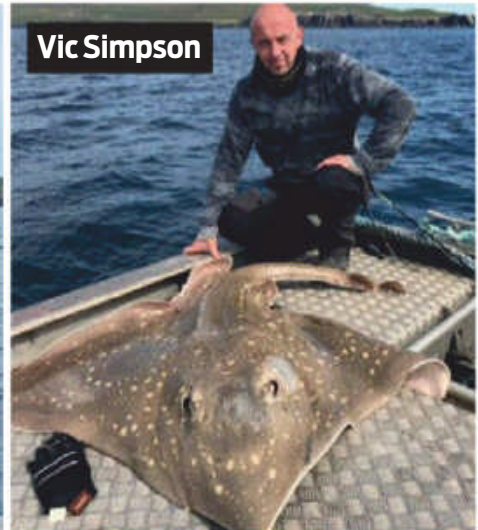
Nathan, along with Vic Simpson and Steve Glaister had three boat sessions over a week and caught all their skate on mackerel baits on running leger rigs with size 12/0 hooks.

Vic, who lives in Scalloway, caught four fish, the best weighing 105lb, and others of 71lb, 63lb and 57lb. As well as the biggest fish, Nathan also boated five more of 108lb, 106lb, 70lb, 55lb and 53lb. Steve, from Sandwick, caught a skate of 120lb.

The 25lb cod fell to Shetland angler John Spreull during the session off Sumburgh. He caught it on a mackerel bait on a size 10/0 hook.



Nathan Johnson



Vic Simpson



John Spreull



Steve Glaister

GILTHEAD BEATS RECORD

A 10lb 6oz gilthead bream is being claimed as a new Channel Islands shore-caught record. The fish, landed by Guernsey angler Toby Patch on a legered crab bait, beats the existing record of 9lb 3oz. The British record is 12lb 2oz.

Patch on a legered crab bait, beats the existing record of 9lb 3oz. The British record is 12lb 2oz.



GUIDED SESSION REALLY PAYS OFF

Steve Dawe and his pal Chris Hodgson had the best wrasse session they have experienced with fish to 4lb 4oz.

Steve tells the story: "The session was a guided wrasse trip with Paul 'Bassman' Gordon, of Fishing Guides Devon. We have done a fair bit of wrasse fishing before, but felt we would benefit from some local advice and angling tips.

"We fished a South Devon rock mark from low water up and switched rigs from Texas-rigged stick baits to Texas-rigged prawn, both methods scoring well but with the

jigged prawn taking the better fish."

After the guided time, they continued catching and ended up with around 40 wrasse. "I smashed my 3lb 8oz personal best with a fish of 4lb 1oz and Chris landed a PB of 4lb 4oz," said Steve. "This was the best wrasse session we have ever experienced with lots of 3lb fish. All the fish were returned. The pictures show my 4lb 1oz fish and Chris with his 4lb 4oz specimen."



Chris Hodgson



Steve Dawe

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reel to the captor of the best shore fish and best boat-caught fish, both chosen on merit. There is no choice of prize, which is awarded at our discretion.



Glen Devine, Withernsea, East Yorkshire. Fish: 23lb smoothhound. **Bait:** Shrimp. **Venue:** Withernsea, East Yorkshire. **Date:** July 8.



Dave Evans, Sandown, Isle of Wight. Fish: 12lb 6oz smoothhound. **Bait:** Squid. **Venue:** Ryde Pier, Isle of Wight. **Date:** July 4.



Darren Golden, Plymouth, Devon. Fish: 36lb tope. **Bait:** Mackerel. **Venue:** Private boat, Plymouth, Devon. **Date:** July 11.



Ben Bissett, Wick, Caithness. Fish: 188lb common skate. **Bait:** Mackerel. **Venue:** Loch Aline, Highlands. **Date:** July 2.



Alex Theo, Kenfig Hill, Bridgend.
Fish: 3lb 1oz spotted ray. **Bait:** Frozen sandeel. **Venue:** Porthcawl Pier, Bridgend.
Date: July 2.



Dan Allen, Williton, Somerset.
Fish: 37lb tope. **Bait:** Mackerel.
Venue: Heritage Charters (Tommo Wright), Ilfracombe, Devon. **Date:** July 18.



Nick Kelly, Plymouth, Devon.
Fish: 15lb 8oz undulate ray. **Bait:** Mackerel.
Venue: Happy Days (Aaron Lidstone), Weymouth, Dorset. **Date:** June 14.

YOUR SHIMANO MISSION ENTRIES

BASS SHORE

Stuart Butler, Bridgend, 5-0, Bridgend
 Mark James, Port Talbot, 8-3, Llansteffan
 Ricky McClure, Stranraer, 7-3*, Port Logan
 Gerwyn Williams, Pencoed, 14-9, Aberavon

BASS BOAT

Andrew Peadon, Dorchester, 11-0*, Poole
 Keith Young, Newport, 10-2*, Needles

COD SHORE

Glen Devine, Withernsea, 7-10, Withernsea
 Alex Swan, Inverkething, 8-8, Arbroath

CONGER SHORE

Lance Edwards, Taunton, 28-10*, Minehead

FLATFISH SHORE

Stuart Butler, Bridgend, 3-0 Dover sole & 2-6 flounder, Newport
 Carl Campion, Swansea, 2-10 Dover sole, Redwick
 Colton Jones, Neath, 2-0 Dover sole, Swansea
 Colin Paterson, Dunrossness, 2-4 flounder*, Dunrossness

MULLET SHORE

Stuart Butler, Bridgend, 2-9 golden grey, Loughor estuary
 Ronan Doherty, Dublin, 4-13*, Roscarberry
 Tyler Williams, Newport, 4-7*, Bembridge

MULLET BOAT

Paul Shapley, Penarth, 6-10 thin-lipped*, Penarth

RAY SHORE

Phillip Basford, Swindon, 7-4 undulate*, Selsey
 Ben Bissett, Wick, 188-0 common skate, Loch Aline
 Stuart Butler, Bridgend, 2-7 spotted, Barry
 Rob Dunk, Longfield, 11-120 undulate*, Shoreham
 Derek Gamlin, Trowbridge, 16-8 blonde*, Sully
 Steve Hobson, Newport, 13-1 undulate, Newport
 Darrell Johnston, Belfast, 9-4 thornback, Fahan beach
 Sean McCaffrey, Scalloway, 9-6 thornback*, Scalloway
 Tom Jenkinson, Brae, 8-5 thornback, Brae
 Charlie Rolph, Ferndown, 9-0 undulate, Southbourne
 Alex Theo, Kenfig Hill, 3-1 spotted, Porthcawl pier
 Stephen Waddell, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, 10-4 thornback*, Balcary
 Colin Voller, Haywards Heath, 13-3 undulate, Lancing
 Chris Voller, Haywards Heath, 11-4 undulate, Lancing

RAY BOAT

Paul Black, Edinburgh, 12-0 undulate*, Weymouth
 Ronan Doherty, Dublin, 192-0 common

skate*, Union Hall
 Ray Gattrell, Portsmouth, 5-8 spotted*, Portsmouth
 Graham Hills, Brighton, 11lb 6oz undulate, Shoreham
 Mitch Johnson, Solihull, 207-0 common skate, Oban
 Nick Kelly, Plymouth, 15-8 undulate, Weymouth
 Chris Pattinson, Tamworth, 12-0 undulate, Weymouth
 Bob Poole, Coventry, 199-0 common skate, Oban
 Scott Souter, Perth, 12-0 undulate*, Weymouth
 Ian Tobin, Coleford, 33-0 stingray, Penarth
 John Wagner, Cricklade, 11-8 undulate*, Swanage Bay

SHARK SHORE

Phillip Basford, Swindon, 11-1 smoothhound*, Selsey
 Glen Devine, Withernsea, 23-0 smoothhound*, Withernsea
 Mark Dibble, Ilfracombe, 11-10 smoothhound*, Peppercombe
 Dave Evans, Sandown, 12-6 smoothhound, Ryde pier
 Lee Goodall, Burry Port, 15-9 smoothhound, Burry Port
 Tom Goodall, Portsmouth, 12-0 smoothhound, Eastney
 Josh Harrison, Cardiff, 10-10 bull huss, Cardiff
 Darrell Johnston, Belfast, 8-8-6 bull huss, Ring of Kerry
 Ross McKay, Castlehill, 40-0 tope, Dumfries & Galloway
 Ken Merrett, Freshwater, 10-14 smoothhound*, Hampstead
 Chris Minchington, Jersey, 40-0 tope*, St Catherine's Breakwater
 Aaron Sterling, Belfast, 8-1 bull huss*, Ring of Kerry
 Paul Steventon, Telford, 8-6 bull huss, Aberystwyth
 Robert Steventon, Telford, 9-8 bull huss, Aberystwyth
 Dave Williams, Pontypridd, 10-4 smoothhound*, Porthcawl

SHARK BOAT

Dan Allen, Williton, 37-0 tope*, Ilfracombe
 Evan Barlow, Maryport, 11-0 smoothhound, Maryport
 Dave Burdett, Wallasey, 12-0 bull huss*, Liverpool
 Joshua Forbes, Bristol, 38-0 tope, Minehead
 Alex Fowler, Aviemore, 42-0 tope, Drummole
 Anthony Georgiou, Bristol, 95-0 blue, Penzance
 Darren Golden, Plymouth, 36-0 tope, Plymouth
 Brad Tremble, Maryport, 15-0 bull huss, Maryport

WRASSE SHORE

Stuart Butler, Bridgend, 3-0, Bridgend
 Steve Dawe, Okehampton, 4-1*, Devon
 Chris Hodgson, Okehampton, 4-5*, Devon
 Sean McCaffrey, Scalloway, 1-1 cuckoo*, Lunna
 Bill Toleman, Beer, 4-4*, Beer



Alex Swan, Inverkeithing, Fife.

Fish: 8lb 8oz cod.
Bait: Peeler crab.
Venue: Arbroath, Angus.
Date: July 4.



Alex Fowler, Aviemore, Highlands.

Fish: 42lb tope.
Bait: Mackerel.
Venue: On Yer Marks Too (Bradley Burrett), Drummore, Dumfries & Galloway.
Date: July 25.

ENTRY FORM

Make sure your email entry includes all these details:

Name

Age

Address

Postcode

Tel

Email

Type of fish

Caught at

Weight

Date caught

Bait/Rig

Caught from: shore ☐ boat ☐

Boat name

Skipper

Port

Witness & tel

My fish was returned ☐
was not returned ☐

Due to the current situation, we can't accept postal entries. Please email the details required above to:
paul.fenech@kelsey.co.uk
Mark the Subject on your email
Mission entry



Brad Tremble, Maryport, Cumbria.

Fish: 15lb bull huss.
Bait: Whole squid.
Venue: Private boat, Maryport, Cumbria.
Date: July 8.

YOUR MISSION TARGETS...

Catch a fish of this weight or above in your region to qualify for the chance to win Shimano tackle. Use the entry form (left) and email the required details and your picture to paul.fenech@kelsey.co.uk

	SHORE	BOAT
Bass	8lb	9lb
Black bream	2lb	3lb
Red bream	2lb	3lb
Couch's & Pandora's bream	1lb 8oz	1lb 8oz
Gilthead bream	4lb	4lb
Ray's bream	3lb	3lb
Brill	3lb	5lb
Bull huss	8lb	12lb
Cod	7lb	15lb
Conger	20lb	40lb
Dab & megrim	1lb	1lb
Dover/lemon sole	2lb	2lb
Flounder	2lb	2lb
Ling	5lb	19lb
Mullet	4lb	5lb
Golden grey mullet	2lb	2lb
Plaice	2lb	4lb
Pollack/coalfish	6lb	12lb
Common skate	60lb	100lb
Blonde ray	12lb	17lb
Thornback ray	9lb	14lb
Small-eyed/undulate	7lb	11lb
Ray (other)	3lb	5lb
Sting/eagle ray	20lb	25lb
Smoothhound	10lb	14lb
Spurdog	7lb	11lb
Tope	27lb	35lb
Turbot	10lb	13lb
Wrasse (ballan)	4lb	4lb
Wrasse (other)	1lb	1lb
Blue shark	-	60lb
Porbeagle/thresher	-	100lb

SEND US YOUR ENTRIES AND WIN SOME GREAT PRIZES



The winners of the best shore-caught and boat-caught fish win a Shimano reel. The sponsor reserves the right to send an alternative prize of equal value.



MONTHLY WINNERS

■ **SHORE:** Gerwyn Williams, 14lb 9oz bass.

■ **BOAT:** Paul Shapley, 6lb 10oz thin-lipped mullet.

THE RULES...

- Only fish caught since August 2020 are eligible.
- We must see a picture of the fish. ■ We may refuse an entry.
- Enter by email (please include information requested on the form) to paul.fenech@kelsey.co.uk
- Prizes are as stated (Shimano reserves the right to send alternatives). No correspondence will be entered into.



Steve Hobson, Newport, Isle of Wight.
Fish: 13lb 1oz undulate ray. **Bait:** Squid.
Venue: Newport, Isle of Wight. **Date:** July 10.



Carl Campion, Swansea, Glamorgan.
Fish: 2lb 10oz Dover sole. **Bait:** Ragworms.
Venue: Redwick, Gwent. **Date:** July 12.



Evan Barlow, Maryport, Cumbria.
Fish: 11lb smoothhound. **Bait:** Whole squid.
Venue: Maryport, Cumbria. **Date:** July 8.



Mark James, Port Talbot, Neath.
Fish: 8lb 3oz bass. **Bait:** Peeler crab.
Venue: Llansteffan, Carms. **Date:** July 16.



Paul Steventon, Telford, Shropshire.
Fish: 8lb 6oz bull huss. **Bait:** Squid. **Venue:** Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. **Date:** July 7.



Charlie Rolph, Ferndown, Dorset. **Fish:** 9lb undulate ray. **Bait:** Rag and squid.
Venue: Southbourne, Dorset. **Date:** July 6.

MISSION RECORD HOLDERS

BASS

■ **Shore:** 19lb 13oz 8dr
John S Locker
■ **Boat:** 19lb 4oz
Wayne Milton

BLACK BREAM

■ **Shore:** 5lb 5oz 1dr
C Le Monnier
■ **Boat:** 6lb 6oz
Tony Heart

COUCH'S BREAM

■ **Shore:** 2lb 15oz 1dr
Lynton Carre
■ **Boat:** 7lb Becky
Lee Hodges

GILTHEAD BREAM

■ **Shore:** 9lb 8oz
Scott Smy
■ **Boat:** 10lb 2oz
Roger Simcox

PANDORA'S BREAM

■ **Shore:** 1lb 2oz
Baz Wheeler
■ **Boat:** 6lb 1oz
Jordan Colwell

RED BREAM

■ **Boat:** 6lb 4oz
Patrick Meegan

BRILL

■ **Shore:** 6lb 12oz
Mark Griggs
■ **Boat:** 13lb 10oz
Tony Hayward

TURBOT

■ **Shore:** 20lb 2oz
Eddy Barham
■ **Boat:** 32lb 1oz
Steve Scally

BULL HUSS

■ **Shore:** 21lb 9oz
M Urquhart
■ **Boat:** 23lb
D Nicholson

COD

■ **Shore:** 32lb
Adrian Lloyd
■ **Boat:** 43lb 9oz
Chris Proctor

CONGER EEL

■ **Shore:** 66lb 8oz
Andy Eke
■ **Boat:** 109lb 8oz
Roger Beer

DAB

■ **Shore:** 2lb 4oz 12dr
Jason Tucker
■ **Boat:** 1lb 15oz
Sean McCaffrey

FLOUNDER

■ **Shore:** 4lb 14oz 8dr
Paul Blehs
■ **Boat:** 5lb 3oz 14dr
Philip Dawson

DOVER SOLE

■ **Shore:** 5lb 5oz
Phil Troke
■ **Boat:** 4lb 6oz
M Le-Moignan

HALIBUT

■ **Boat:** 56lb 12oz
Peter Strickson
■ **Shore:** 3lb 3oz
G Newcombe

MEGRIM

■ **Boat:** 2lb 14oz
Philip Lewis
■ **Shore:** 6lb 11oz
Martin Coates

PLAICE

■ **Shore:** 8lb 0oz 8dr
M Mowbray
■ **Shore:** 18lb 11oz
Ross McKay

LING

■ **Boat:** 88lb 6oz 8dr
G Laurenson
■ **Shore:** 3lb 8oz 8dr
D Woolcombe

GOLDEN GREY MULLET

■ **Shore:** 4lb 11oz
Stephan Martini
■ **Shore:** 11lb 8oz
Glenn Lane

MULLET

■ **Boat:** 11lb
Chris Harris

POLLACK

■ **Shore:** 18lb 4oz
Chris Griffin
■ **Boat:** 27lb 1oz
Barry James

BLONDE RAY

■ **Shore:** 31lb
Gary Tucker
■ **Boat:** 39lb 10oz
S Underwood

COMMON SKATE

■ **Shore:** 232lb
Lew Marsden
■ **Boat:** 249lb
Hans Dykman

CUCKOO RAY

■ **Shore:** 4lb 11oz
Kevin Hughes
■ **Boat:** 5lb 8oz
L Longmore

EAGLE RAY

■ **Shore:** 102lb
Ray Lewis
■ **Boat:** 52lb
Chris Wood

MARBLED ELECTRIC

■ **Shore:** 11lb 1oz 5dr
Pierre Garrick
■ **Boat:** 21lb 7oz 12dr
David Bree

SMALL-EYED RAY

■ **Shore:** 17lb 8oz
M Robertson
■ **Boat:** 21lb
Dave Lynes

SPOTTED RAY

■ **Shore:** 7lb 14oz
Liam Warder
■ **Boat:** 8lb 4oz
Neil Buckett

STINGRAY

■ **Shore:** 75lb 4oz
Ed Spring
■ **Boat:** 69lb 8oz
John Styles

THORNBACK RAY

■ **Shore:** 22lb 11oz 10dr
Mike Johnson
■ **Boat:** 24lb 11oz
Gary Mewdell

UNDULATE RAY

■ **Shore:** 20lb 1oz
Steve Harder
■ **Boat:** 25lb 2oz
Scott Russell

ANGEL SHARK

■ **Boat:** 54lb
John Johnson
■ **Shore:** 253lb
James Fellows

MAKO SHARK

■ **Shore:** 194lb 4oz
Andrew Griffith
■ **Boat:** 484lb 8oz
Chris Bett

PORBEAGLE SHARK

■ **Shore:** 350lb
Bob Smith
■ **Shore:** 28lb 10oz
Steve Cullen

SMOOTH HOUND

■ **Boat:** 30lb
Trevor Knight
■ **Shore:** 18lb 14oz
William Roche

SPURDOG

■ **Shore:** 25lb 4oz
Shane Salmon
■ **Shore:** 66lb 10oz
Michael Bell

TOPE

■ **Boat:** 86lb
David Cook
■ **Shore:** 9lb 4oz
Darren Swift

BALLAN WRASSE

■ **Shore:** 9lb
Glen Carter
■ **Shore:** 11lb 13oz
Joe Edward

CUCKOO WRASSE

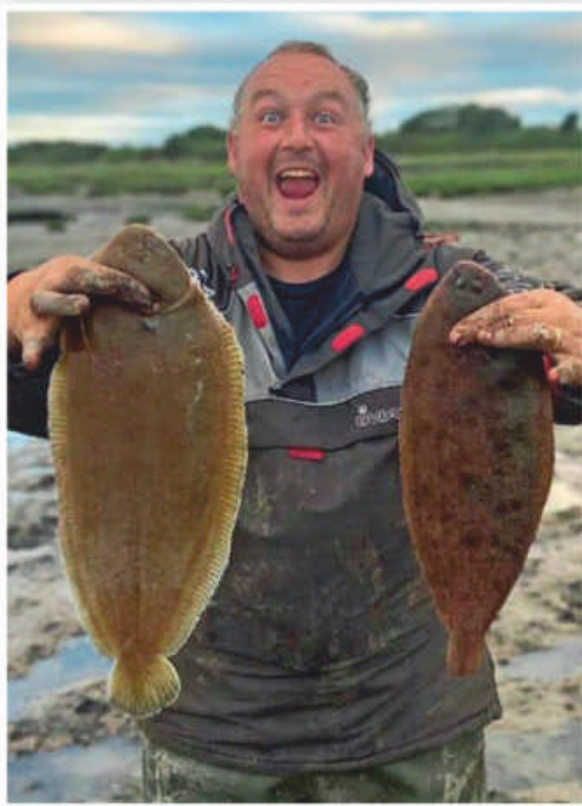
■ **Boat:** 2lb 4oz
D Glendenning
■ **Shore:** 160lb
Pete Hammersley

* denotes catch and release

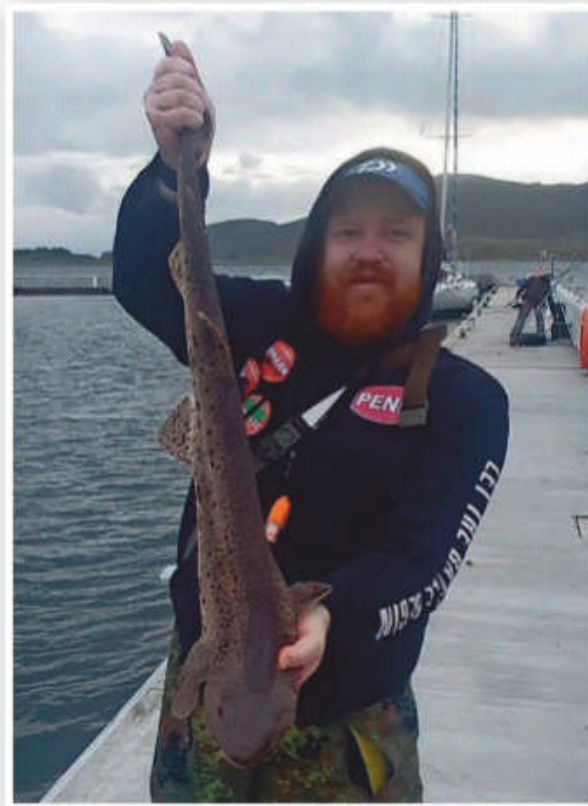
YOUR FISHING | CATCHES



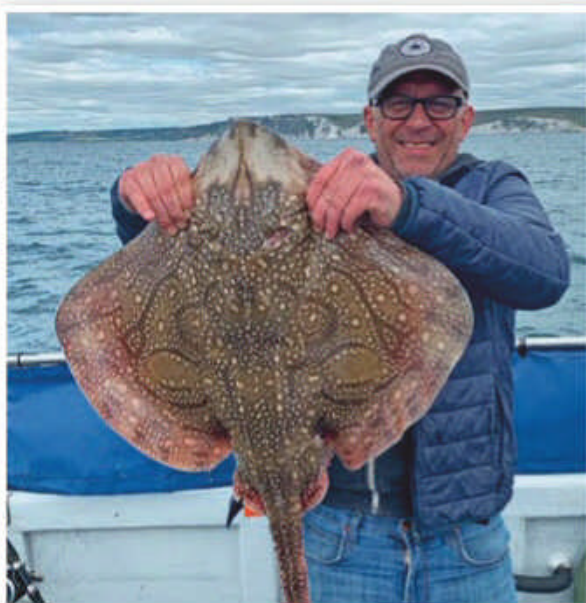
Rob Dunk, Longfield, Kent. **Fish:** 11lb 10oz undulate ray. **Bait:** Mackerel and squid. **Venue:** Shoreham, Sussex. **Date:** July 11.



Stuart Butler, Bridgend. **Fish:** 3lb Dover sole. **Bait:** Ragworms. **Venue:** Newport, Cardiff. **Date:** July 20.



Aaron Sterling, Belfast, Northern Ireland. **Fish:** 8lb 1oz bull huss. **Bait:** Mackerel. **Venue:** Ring of Kerry, Ireland. **Date:** July 1.



Paul Black, Edinburgh. **Fish:** 12lb undulate ray. **Bait:** Mackerel. **Venue:** Sally Ann Jo (Colin Baker), Weymouth, Dorset. **Date:** July 16.



Darrell Johnston, Belfast, N Ireland. **Fish:** 8lb 8oz 6dr bull huss. **Bait:** Mackerel fillet. **Venue:** Ring of Kerry, Ireland. **Date:** July 1.



Anthony Georgiou, Withywood, Bristol. **Fish:** 95lb blue shark. **Bait:** Whiting. **Venue:** Penzance, Cornwall. **Date:** July 14.



Joshua Forbes, Keynsham, Bristol. **Fish:** 38lb tope. **Bait:** Mackerel. **Venue:** Teddy Boy Charters (Michael Webber Griffiths), Minehead, Somerset. **Date:** July 24.



Lance Edwards, Taunton, Somerset. **Fish:** 28lb 10oz conger. **Bait:** Mackerel head. **Venue:** Minehead, Somerset. **Date:** July 11.



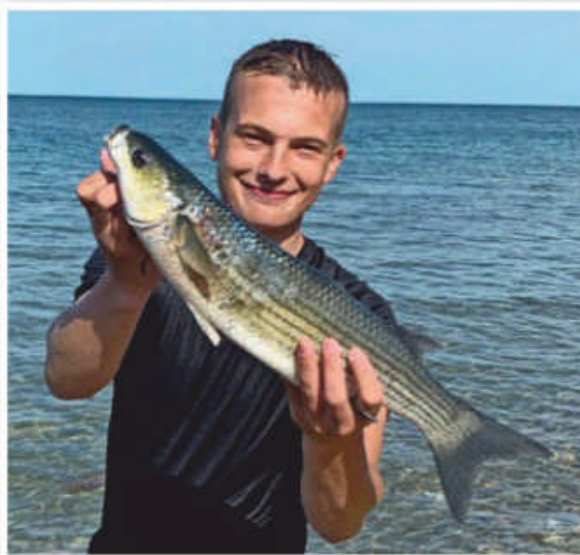
Ross McKay, Castlehill, Dumbarton.
Fish: 40lb tope. **Bait:** Mackerel.
Venue: Dumfries & Galloway.
Date: July 16.



Scott Souter, Perth, Scotland.
Fish: 12lb undulate ray. **Bait:** Mackerel.
Venue: Sally Ann Jo (Colin Baker), Weymouth, Dorset. **Date:** July 14.



Robert Steventon, Telford, Shropshire.
Fish: 9lb 8oz bull huss. **Bait:** Squid.
Venue: Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. **Date:** July 7.



Tyler Williams, Newport, Isle of Wight.
Fish: 4lb 7oz mullet. **Bait:** Bread. **Venue:** Bembridge, Isle of Wight. **Date:** July 12.



Josh Harrison, St Mellons, Cardiff.
Fish: 10lb 10oz bull huss. **Bait:** Mackerel.
Venue: Cardiff. **Date:** July 11.



Dave Williams, Pontypridd, Rhondda.
Fish: 10lb 4oz smoothhound. **Bait:** Squid.
Venue: Newton Point, Porthcawl, Bridgend.
Date: July 22.



Andrew Peadon, Dorchester, Dorset. **Fish:** 11lb bass.
Bait: Rag & squid cocktail.
Venue: Piscary (Matt Rowe), Poole, Dorset. **Date:** July 24.

YOUNG RODS

Sea Angler's celebration of the great angling achievements of its younger readers



Whitstable, Kent angler **Jimmy Collar** travelled to Sandwich Bay where he caught this 8lb 12oz thornback ray. The nine-year-old used a Bluey and squid wrap on a size 4/0 Pennell rig.



Jess Fraser, of St Margarets, Kent, landed her first-ever smoothhound when she fished at Deal beach. The fish took a peeler crab on a pulley rig.

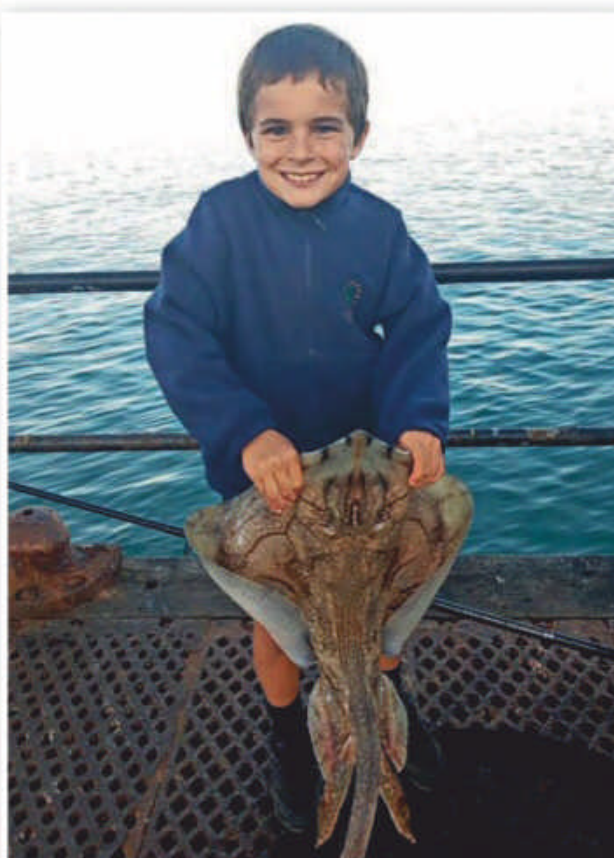


Benji Stevens from Penzance, Cornwall, caught this bass weighing 4lb 9oz when he fished from the beach at Perranuthnoe. The 12-year-old used lug baits on a two-hook flapper rig and returned the fish after a brief photocall.



While fishing from her grandad's boat out of Whitehaven in Cumbria, nine-year-old **Grace Chennells** caught this gurnard when she used a set of feathers.

Tomas Kennefick, from Purley, near London, used a whole Bluey to tempt this 8lb undulate ray. The nine-year-old was fishing from Worthing Pier, in West Sussex, and used a two-hook flapper rig.



On his maiden shore fishing trip, **Kallum Del Signore**, from Deal, in Kent, caught this treble shot of two dogfish and a pouting on his first cast at Walmer beach.

HOW TO ENTER
Send your pictures,
name and address,
age, species caught,
weight, where
caught, bait and rig
to paul.fenech@kelsey.co.uk



Four-year-old **Frankie Souster** caught this school bass during a shore session in the Blackwater estuary, Essex.



Using lobworms for bait, five-year-old **Evan Grant**, from Elgin, in Scotland, caught this flounder weighing 11lb 8oz while fishing at Lossiemouth Pier.

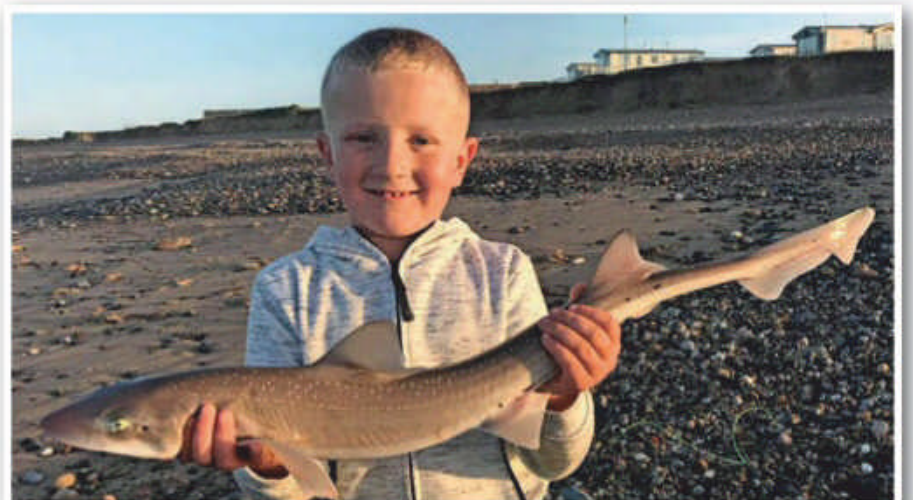


SeaAngler
MONTHLY
WINNER

Jack Read caught this smoothhound weighing 13lb 12oz when he fished at Cardiff Foreshore. The 12-year-old used a peeler crab bait on single-hook paternoster rig and 2/0 circle hook.



Ryan Asmore shows off a cracking smoothhound weighing 13lb 5oz that he caught at Bideford, in Devon. The local 14-year-old presented a peeler crab on a 2/0 hook.



Myles Hodgson travelled from his home in Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, to Easington, on the Holderness Coast. The seven-year-old used a peeler crab bait mounted to a pulley rig to bag himself this smoothhound.



On her first shore trip, **Poppy Savage** successfully beached this school bass at Caister beach, Norfolk. The seven-year-old, from Litcham, used lug baits mounted to a two-hook boom rig.

£25 TACKLE VOUCHER WINNERS



Fishingmegastore.com awards a £25 voucher prize to each of two winners - the youngster with the best shore fish and another with the top boat catch. The winners can use the voucher to select tackle from **Fishingmegastore.com** which is based in Glasgow and Edinburgh.



Eight-year-old **Riley Ryan** fished near to his home at Trearddur Bay, Holyhead, where he landed this 9lb bull huss with a mackerel bait on a pulley rig armed with a 6/0 Pennell.



Seth Allison, aged four, caught this codling on his first beach session at Hornsea, East Yorkshire. The lad, from Scarborough, used a two-hook rig loaded with rag tipped with squid and quickly returned the fish back to the sea.



Edward Frost, 10, fished a local rock mark near to his home in Barnstaple, Devon. Using a whole squid for bait, he tempted this smoothhound (above) that weighed 9lb 10oz.



While fishing at the River Torridge in Devon, **Max Peake** caught this smoothhound weighing 10lb. The nine-year-old, who lives in Bideford, used a peeler crab bait on a pulley rig.



Finnan Williams, 12, shows off a brace of Dover sole weighing 11lb 1oz and 11lb 4oz, that he caught at Newport in South Wales. Finnan, who hails from nearby Crumlin, used ragworms on a two-hook flapper rig.



Kaiden Wellington Tucker, from Torquay, in Devon, landed this school bass on a Dexter Wedge while fishing at a local mark.

MY FISHING DIARY

ADVENTURES OF A JUNIOR SHORE ANGLER

Eight-year-old Tyneside angler Harley Thompson gives an account of his latest shore fishing trip...

After hearing reports of bass being caught along the Holderness and Lincolnshire beaches, my dad decided it was time to travel down to sample the action.

On arrival at Skegness, the weather was pleasant and, more importantly, the conditions were perfect for bass, with a decent surf rolling in and lots of colour in the water too. It was late afternoon and I was feeling extremely confident that a few fish would begin to feed as the light faded.

Itching to get a line in the water, I quickly set up my kit and aimed my pulley rig and crab bait into the surf, full of anticipation.

My target species were bass and smoothhounds, and a fresh peeler crab bait is definitely the best bait to use. Bass can also be caught using worm and fish baits, but I'd heard that the better stamp of fish were falling to crab baits. However, I did have some lug and ragworms as a back-up.

My first few casts produced nothing, not even a bite, but I knew when the tide started to flood, things would pick up. Like most venues, the tide makes all the difference, and I was hopeful for some action as it crept up the beach.

As darkness fell, the tide started to run harder, and eventually my first bite registered dramatically on the rod tip. Even though I'd set my drag on the reel, the rod was ripped clean out of the tripod!

I immediately grabbed it and leaned back to feel a fish pulling hard. I pumped the rod and reeled slowly and eventually the fish emerged from the surf. It was a cracker,



Peeler crab baits are essential

This 9lb smoothhound was my best of the session



HARLEY'S TOP TIP
Fish move close in at night so don't rule out casting shorter.

too, and a new personal-best bass for me, weighing 4lb exactly.

Over the next few hours I caught fish every cast, it was hectic. It didn't matter where I cast, the fish were on the bait immediately. I lost count of how many smoothhounds I caught, with my biggest tipping the scales to 9lb. The bass were feeding in numbers too, and I managed to land eight.

The tide had now pushed us right to the back of the beach and the fish suddenly disappeared. Suddenly, my ratchet screamed off and sparked me into life. The reel was screaming and the mainline was disappearing from the spool at pace.

I held on, but this fish didn't want to stop. After a short while, it slowed and I began to pump the rod, only gaining a little bit of line at a time.

The fish decided it wasn't ready and started running again, but sadly resulted in it biting clean through my 80lb hook snood. I reckon it was a tope and I was absolutely devastated to miss out on that fish.

The session ended and I was shattered, the action was non-stop and I can't wait for another visit to the beach at Skegness. ■

A new personal best bass



OUT THERE

Dragon Baits.

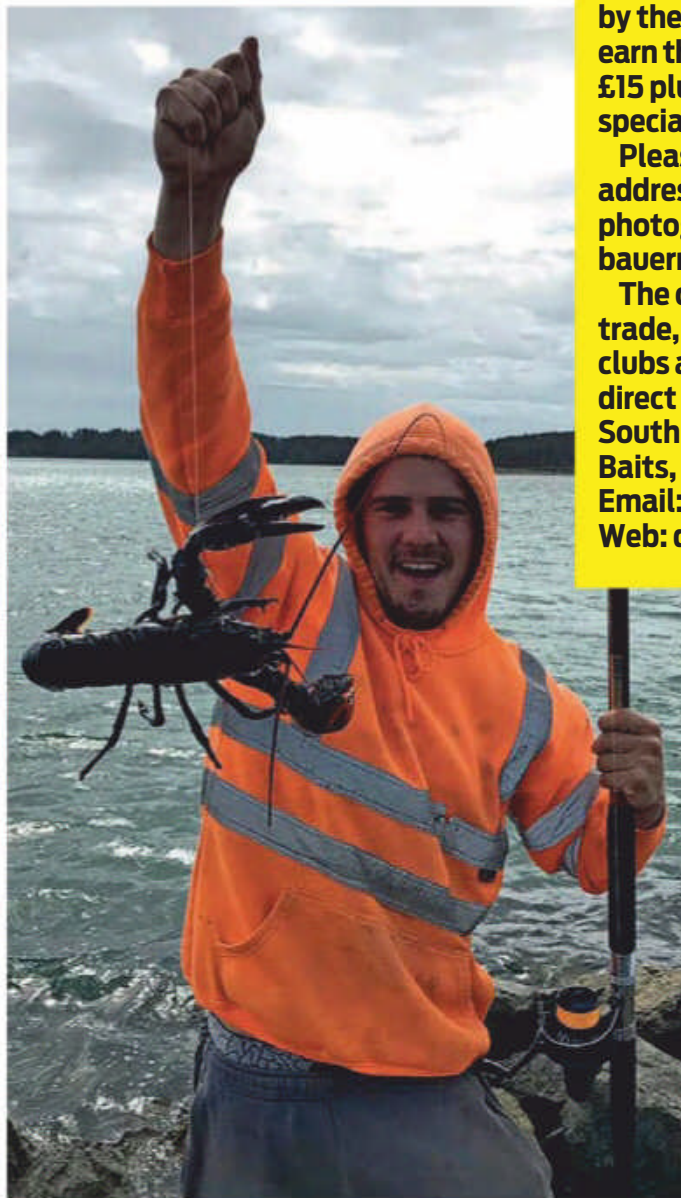
Memorable moments from your latest sessions

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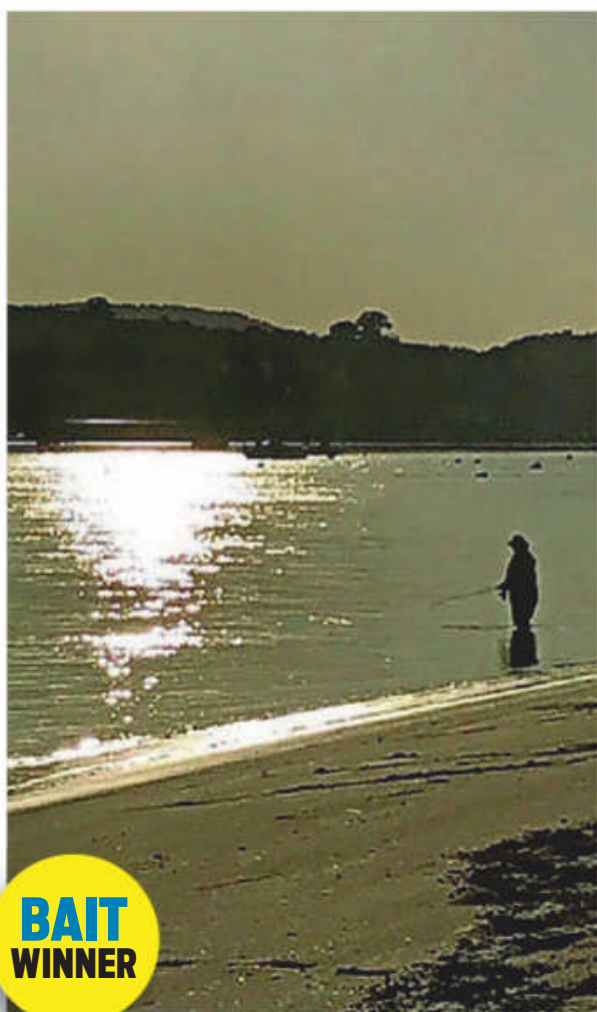
Please include your name and address when submitting your photograph to cliff.brown@bauermedia.co.uk.

The company supplies the trade, organisations, fishing clubs and individual anglers direct from its farm in South Wales. Contact Dragon Baits, tel: 01639 894111. Email: info@dragonbaits.co.uk Web: dragonbaits.co.uk



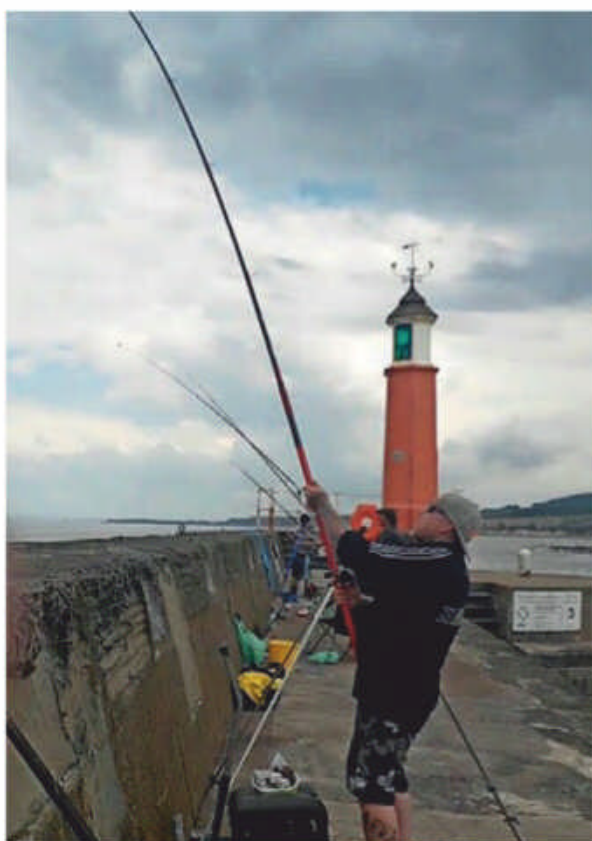
TASTY TREATS:

Billie Clarke (far left) got a surprise while fishing at Millbay, Plymouth, when a 5lb lobster grabbed his mackerel bait. The same happened to Mike Bentley (left), of Holyhead, Anglesey, while out fishing at a local mark.



**BAIT
WINNER**

SUN AND SAND: The sun glistens on the Exe estuary as Bob Paterson enjoys the moment. "I thought it was a lovely picture," said Bob, from Exmouth, Devon.



HOUND ON: Fishing a rising tide at Watchet Harbour wall in Somerset produced four smoothhounds to 17lb 4oz for Dave Rawson.

"I lost three because I was fishing with two rods and both were going at the same time," said the angler from Taunton, who used Pennell rigs with size 5/0 hooks baited with squid.



ON AND OFF: Taking the strain of a tope is Matt Shallis who was fishing with a group of anglers from Bristol on board Michael Webber's Teddie Boy, out of Minehead, Somerset. Unfortunately, the big fish had other ideas.

Our informant from the trip revealed: "Having lost a first tope of the day, he was holding the rod as tight as he could, playing his second. As it came closer Matt was getting more and more excited, but as he turned the reel a couple of times to gain line the fish let go of the bait."



FAMILY BONDING: With lots of thornback rays being caught in the Morecambe area, Lancs, Matty Preston seized the chance to take his family fishing. His son Luke (14) and daughters Maisie (9) and Poppy (4) all caught thornbacks.



ON THE ROCKS: Stuart Butler, of Bridgend, had a good day on the rocks: "I fished a beautiful rock mark, caught a 2lb 7oz bass and a smoothhound. Superb session in the thunderstorm. Loads of dogfish. I also missed one cracking bite."

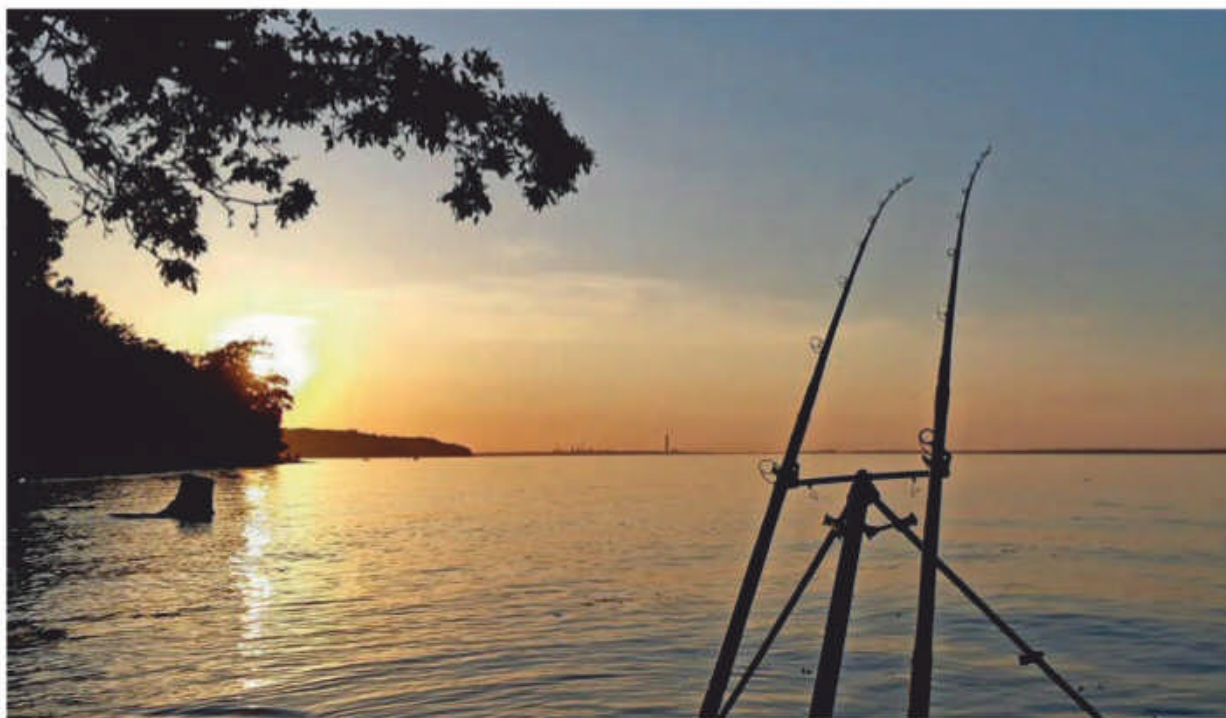


COOL FISH: Nine-year-old Lloyd Morgan signals his approval after catching a tope, estimated at 20lb-plus. The lad from Gower, Swansea, caught it on a spinning rod, 30lb trace and size 3/0 hook with a squid bait. "It was too rough for the bass grounds, so we stayed in Oxwich Bay. I have never seen him more excited," said dad Rob, who helped out for the photograph.



BITES ALL DAY: Battling with a ray is Andy Georgiou, from Withywood, Bristol, during a trip on Teddie Boy, with skipper Michael Webber, out of Minehead, Somerset.

His son Anthony reports: "It was a tad blowy in the morning with a west wind and gusts of 20mph, but we managed to fish through it. Plenty of fish around and the day looked very promising. The wind gradually died down and the fish just kept biting until the very end." They caught plenty of rays, to 14lb.



WIGHT WONDER: While fishing the north-east coast of the Isle of Wight, James Butchers, of East Cowes, captured a magical twilight during a smoothhound session.



BRANCHING OUT: When you are only four, it doesn't matter if your dad sets you up with a piece of driftwood as a rod-rest, it's the adventure that counts. Heidi Phillips was fishing with dad Matty at Barrow in Furness, Cumbria, and caught her first bass on a two-hook flapper rig baited with a peeler crab.

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5/5

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Finance example based on 36 months, 19.5% APR, Cash Price £1475, 10% Deposit £147.50, Monthly Payment £61.91, Total Amount Payable £1508.82

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BOAT ANGLER

19 pages of advice, tips and tactics for fishing afloat

A man with a beard, wearing a bright blue hooded rain jacket and dark sunglasses, is on a boat. He is holding two sharks. One shark is held vertically by its tail in his right hand, and the other is held horizontally in his left hand, showing its head and open mouth. The background shows the ocean and a clear sky. The boat's railing and some fishing equipment are visible.

It's perfect, but...

As the lockdown eased, a charter party couldn't wait to get out fishing, although there's a bait problem to overcome



Words and
photography by
DAVE LEWIS

Matthew Allen (right)
Andrew Willis (left)
display a brace of
smoothhounds



AS SKIPPER JJ HADDEN flicked off the last mooring line and stepped into the wheelhouse to pilot Ice Maiden out of the claustrophobic, concrete-encased lock chamber of Cardiff Bay Barrage, he said: “There are smoothhounds everywhere at the moment and both the weather and the tide are perfect. You’re going to fill your boots;

I hope you have got plenty of crabs?”

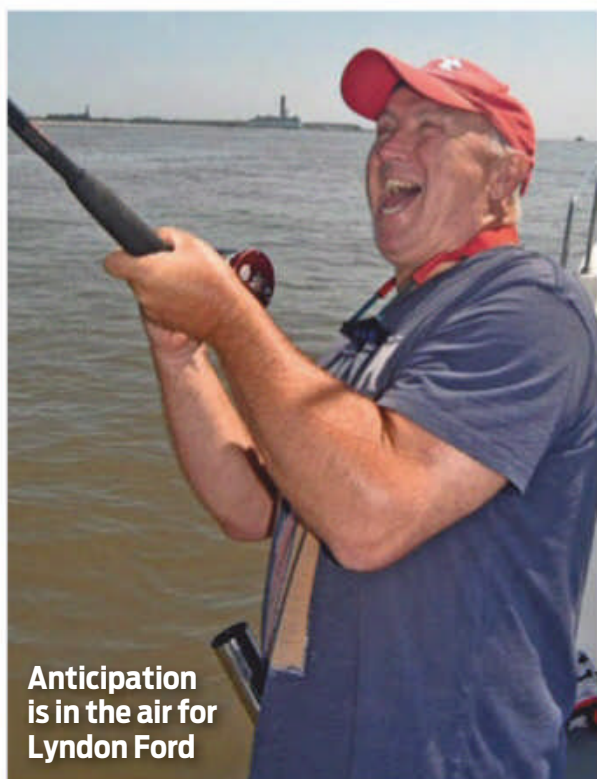
In response there was silence, not a whisper, and the look on the crew’s faces told the story. No, they didn’t have plenty of crabs.

“I’ve got some frozen crabs, but not many,” volunteered the lad standing in the starboard quarter, but no, as far as crabs went for bait, we certainly did not have plenty.

Under normal circumstances a charter skipper’s immediate response upon discovering that a crew had turned up without

sufficient bait for the day’s target species would have been both instant and brutal. On this occasion, ‘JJ’ simply shrugged his shoulders in acceptance of the situation. It was early June and Welsh anglers were only gradually being allowed to return to boat fishing following months of lockdown.

Faced with a five-mile travel limit along with numerous access restrictions, driving to a beach to collect their own bait for most anglers was simply not an option, and all ►



Anticipation is in the air for Lyndon Ford

tackle shops within the Principality remained closed. Crabs or no crabs, we were determined to have a great day afloat in the Bristol Channel. Everyone was simply happy to be back aboard a charter boat and going fishing. On this occasion a perfect mid-summer's morning was simply the icing on the cake.

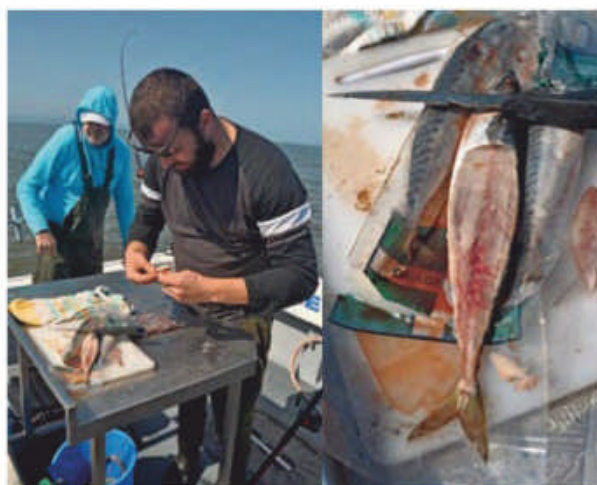
CONSISTENT MARK

It was no surprise that the first mark JJ took us to was Aberthaw Bay. This is arguably the most consistent mark anywhere in the UK for smoothhounds, regardless of whether you are fishing from a boat or from the adjacent shoreline. Its broken ground is perfect for hounds, and this is a venue where you never know what is going to pick up your bait next.

At some time during the morning I had casually mentioned to JJ that this was the perfect time of year and the conditions were ideal to see a stingray, which are something of a rarity in South Wales. We didn't see a stingray, but just two days later I saw shared images on social media of a 33lb stinger caught aboard another charter boat fishing very close to where we had been.

In this part of the Bristol Channel fishing the ebb tide is almost always more productive than the flood, and JJ had timed our arrival perfectly to coincide with the first of the ebb run after high tide.

Key when fishing this area is to ensure that your bait is always fishing hard on the seabed.



Hooking another mackerel fillet bait

Andrew Willis with the skipper and another hound



Robert Phillips with a lovely hound...



Crab is the most effective bait to use...

In order to achieve this, it is essential you use a decent grip weight either cast uptide in the classic way, or alternatively simply dropped off the transom. When you feel the lead weight tap on the bottom, release a bow of line in the tide to assist it to grip. The alternative is to use an unnecessarily large plain lead, which these days very few anglers elect to do.

Regardless of what bait you use at Aberthaw Bay, it is only a matter of time before something will eat it. Sure enough, within minutes of starting to fish, nodding rod tips indicated the first bites. It came as no great surprise when the first few fish caught were the inevitable strap congers and dogfish, but it wasn't long before a healthy bend in Andrew Willis's rod indicated



...but squid can be a quite effective too

he had connected with a more substantial fish.

With his line gradually cutting uptide, we strongly suspected Andrew had hooked the first hound of the session. A few minutes later JJ leaned over the side with the landing net and scooped up a near double-figure fish. Yes, Andrew was the angler who had managed to bring some crabs, which throughout the rest of the session produced around half-a-dozen fish of a similar size for him.

FISH FILLED

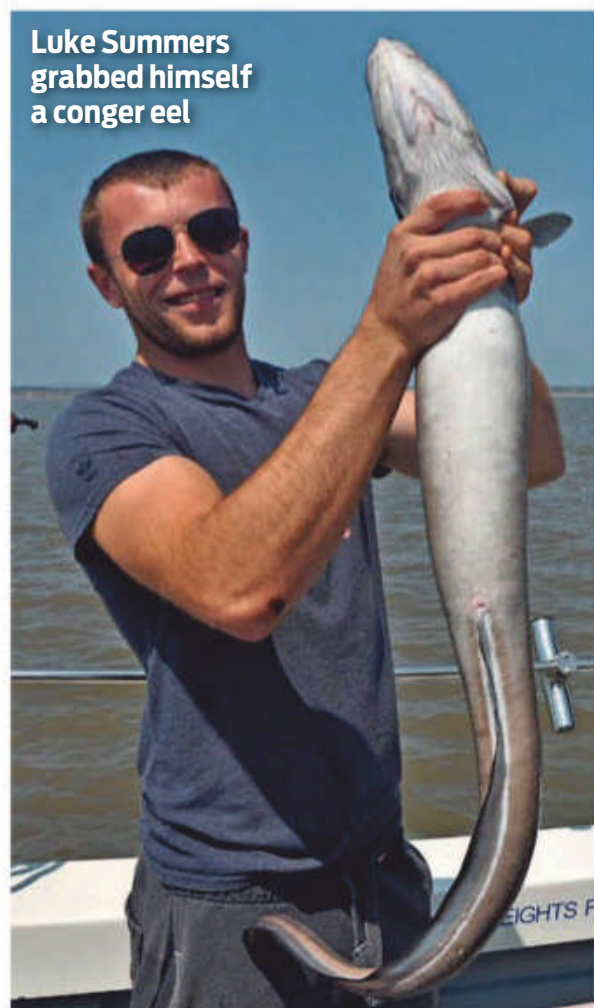
By necessity, the rest of the crew were using either mackerel or squid for bait, both of which are very good for a wide variety of different species. Squid can be a reasonably effective



Lyndon Ford with a thornback



Skipper JJ Hadden gets in on the action



Luke Summers grabbed himself a conger eel



...and one for his son, Louis Phillips too



A thornback ray for Andrew Willis

bait for hounds too, but not nearly as effective as a crab. If there are foraging smoothhounds around, then you'll likely catch a few using squid, less so fish baits.

If smoothhounds are your target species then it is much better if several, if not all anglers are fishing with crabs because the combined scent of multiple baits drifting off downtime will attract fish in exactly the same way a rubby-dubby groundbait bag works for sharks. On days when this has been possible, I have experienced fishing where the sport has been nothing short of hectic. On the very best days, here at Aberthaw, it can be a case of cast a fresh bait out, place the rod in a holder, and almost immediately watch the tip buckle over, as

yet another fish inhales the crab and swims off.

That day aboard Ice Maiden, the fishing never quite got to what you could describe as hectic, but we enjoyed a steady succession of fish from the first casts of the morning through until the last of the afternoon. Almost everyone caught several smoothhounds, along with plenty of eels and dogfish, and a few thornback rays which, as expected, started to move in over the baits when the tide eased towards low water.

I suppose you could accurately describe our trip as being a bread and butter, fish-filled day, which, of course, was precisely the sort of day that enthusiastic boat anglers had been craving throughout all of those long and tedious months of enforced lockdown. ■

NEED TO KNOW

■ Ice Maiden is an Offshore 105 powered by a 430hp Ford engine that can produce a speed of 20 knots. To book a trip, contact JJ Hadden, tel: 07989 695854 or 01633 255447.





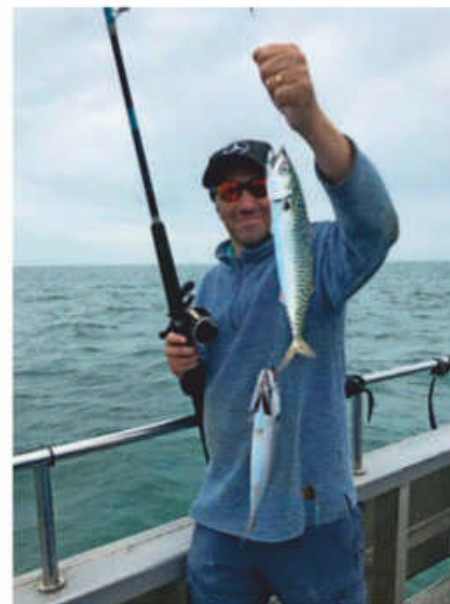
My way with bait

Charter skipper Sam Cumming reveals some of his favourite options

AS WE PUSH ON FURTHER INTO the summer and anglers have had their fill of the hard-fighting bream on the reefs and big pollack on the wrecks, we enjoy a wide range of fishing aboard my charter boat Silver Spray, which operates out of the large harbour at Poole, Dorset.

This means we quite often try three types of fishing in one day and such variety requires a wide selection of bait. The right bait correctly presented is the most important factor towards having a successful day afloat.

Here are some of my favourite baits and how to present them to have the best chance of hooking up your target species.



MACKEREL

It is no surprise that mackerel is the most frequently used bait by boat anglers throughout much of the country. How the mackerel fishing is trending in each coastal area can be a hot topic on a charter boat. Luckily, we seem to be having our second decent season in a row, with every session with the feathers so far producing good signs of life.

An interesting talking point is whether mackerel is best as a bait when fresh out of the water or if you are better with something that has been in the cool box for a while.

An example that springs to mind is turbot fishing in the Channel Islands. After usually fishing the mid-channel wrecks going over on the first day, we try to catch a bucket or two of mackerel on the way into the harbour. It means we have some bait for the next day. Looking back through my diaries, the best flatfish catches have always been when we have had day-old mackerel that has softened up a little.

As I've mentioned before, strong tide means ensuring any bait is streamlined to get the best results. There is nothing worse than fishing a long drift and retrieving your rig to find a spinning bait has tangled your trace around your lead weight.

Mackerel can be used in many ways from a live bait, flapper, fillet, strips or chunks.



Day-old mackerel can be good for turbot and brill

LIVE BAIT: A popular choice with anglers fishing for tope and bass is a live bait, usually mackerel, but other fish can be used. I'm often asked how to hook it. My advice is to use a single size 4/0 circle or Kamasan-style hook and put it through the bait's top lip, slightly in front of the eyes. Do not hook it through the lower lip and out the top of the head because the fish can't get freshly oxygenated water and will die very quickly.



Hook the live bait through its top lip



Hook the flapper through the bottom jaw and out of the top of the head

FLAPPER: Another popular way to present a whole mackerel is the flapper. Completely opposite to the live bait, you should always hook this through the bottom jaw and out the top of the head to keep the mouth shut.

You would not think this would make a lot of difference, but if you are fishing in nearly two knots of tide then it tends to

open up the mouth of the bait and cause it to spin.

To cut a flapper safely, you must always cut away from your fingers. Hold the fish's head in your left hand and insert the blade just above its spine and out the other side. Keep the blade at a slight downward angle and use the spine to guide it all the way along and out the other end.

Keeping the fish on the same side, insert the blade underneath the spine this time and angle the knife slightly upwards, again using the backbone as a guide all the way along.

You should end up with the backbone and tail free in the middle of the flapper. Cut the backbone and tail away near the head end and throw it overboard.



1 Insert blade above the spine and out the other side, using the spine to guide it



2 After cutting one side, insert blade under the spine and cut away the other side



3 Cut the backbone and tail away near the head end to leave the intact flapper

FILLET/STRIP: A mackerel fillet is simply one side of the mackerel, which can be used as one whole side or cut in two to create thinner strips. Always put the hook through the thicker end of the fillet.



Fillets can be fished whole or cut into two smaller pieces



A whole launce hooked through lower jaw and head



LAUNCE

A perfect alternative to a thin strip of mackerel fillet is the ever-abundant launce, which are caught in good numbers with small sabiki feathers when over the banks. The best way to present these is a tail flapper.

Think normal flapper, like you would have for a conger or tope but backwards. Hold the launce's head in your left hand, cut down to the spine. Then, holding the knife at a slight angle just below the horizontal, follow the backbone along until you're an inch from the tail. Remove the knife, turn the fish over and repeat on the other side. When you get down to you tail simply apply a little more pressure on the blade until you feel the backbone cut.

This should have removed the head, spine and guts, leaving you to cut off the tail fin to stop it from spinning on the way down. The best way to hook this is once through the thick end leaving the two fillets to flap around in the tide and attract a willing flatfish. Launce is a tough bait and I've seen anglers use the same flapper to catch three or four flatfish in a row.



A launce flapper with the head, spine and guts removed



GARFISH

Another tough bait, suitable either when drifting or anchoring, is the garfish.

Although they are slightly harder to track down, they are worth the extra effort if you can catch a few. They have a very high oil

content and the skin retains its toughness, even when it has been frozen.

Cut into strips and presented on a flowing trace with a size 4/0 Kamasan hooked once through the thin end is a great way to target rays, turbot, bass and tope.

RAGWORMS

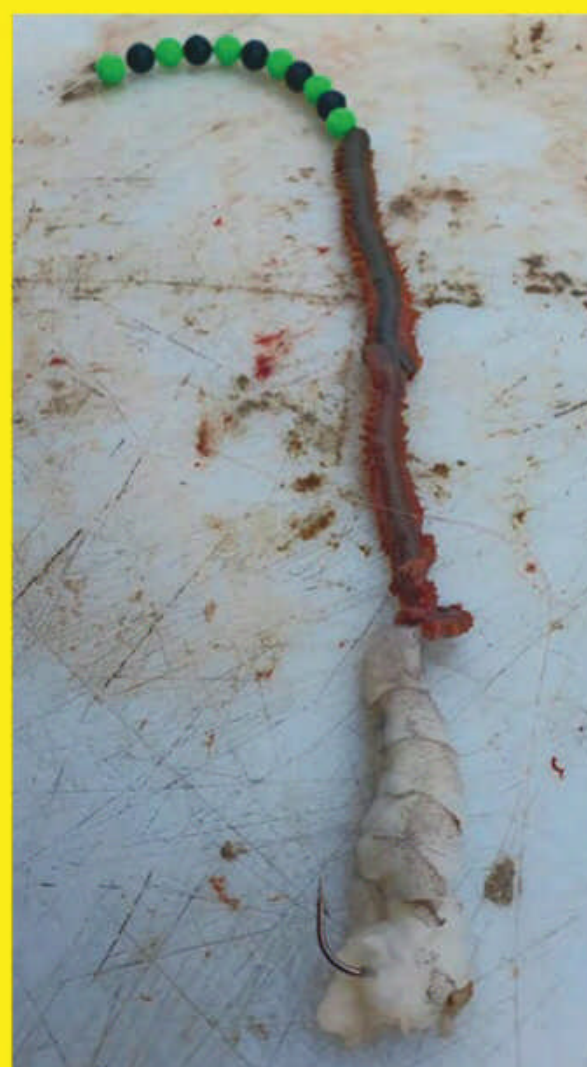
The traditional bait for a plaice trip has always been ragworms, maybe lugworms if you are feeling fancy. These days raw king prawns are an essential addition to get the bigger plaice biting. These attract a number of other species too.

Presentation is more crucial because all the beads, spoons and spinners make plaice rigs some of the worst for tangling. I go big for the plaice because the bait gets a lot of attention from small fish such as pin whiting, dabs, school bass, bream, scad and even smoothhounds. It saves having to wind up and re-bait every time you get a little rattle.

Thread two or three ragworms up the hook and on to your trace line, being careful not to leave too much dangling off. Now, with a prawn, do the same starting at the thin end. Thread it all the way round the hook and up to the eye. The hook shank straightens out the prawn's natural curve and prevents it from spinning when drifting along the seabed. Make sure your hook point has not been covered by the bait otherwise you can miss more bites.



First thread two or three ragworms on to the hook and then on to your trace line



Thread on the prawn, pushing it up to the eye of the hook, leaving the point showing



SQUID

Fresh squid can be caught between October and January in various spots, but, in my opinion, it is too nice for bait and goes straight to the kitchen.

I usually keep the head and guts to one side and use it as a large winter bait fished on a single hook flowing trace with a size 10/0 meat hook. It always results a decent fish such as a conger eel, ray, bass or winter cod (unicorn).

When fresh stuff is not available, use frozen calamari that are about six inches long. This can be used all year round and catches fish ranging from spurdogs in the winter to bream in the spring and rays in the autumn. It seems to be a real favourite with the fish. Make sure it hasn't gone pink or purple, which means the bait has perished and is no good. Fish prefer squid that is still bright white. Causes of deterioration can be leaving it out in the sun during your trip or freezing and defrosting the whole box multiple times.

Whole calamari squid can be teamed with mackerel in a big cocktail bait. Hook the two baits at the thin end and bind securely with elastic cotton.



Mackerel and squid cocktail hooked and secured with elastic

TOP TIP

Don't be tight with your bait. Always take a variety of choices if you are not sure what you might need. Keep the chilled bait in a cool box and defrost as needed. That way you can take unused bait home again.



NEED TO KNOW

■ Sam Cumming is the skipper of Silver Spray II, out of Poole, Dorset. To book a trip, tel: 07787 375386.

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New twist for turbot

How a slight change in a rig can really increase your hit rate with big flatties

Off we go



The fishing is great
fun with a heavy
spinning outfit





DURING A FANTASTIC DAY'S TURBOT fishing on board Kelley's Hero II from Hayling Island recently, one of the anglers on board showed me a rather interesting rig. Needless to say, he caught more turbot than anyone else on board. Coincidence? I think not.

The rig in question is still being field-tested, but, as this trip showed, it's extremely effective and Simon Adams, from H&S Tackle, reckons he'll be producing the ready-tied rigs very shortly. If you want to keep up to date, then have a look at the Facebook page – H&S Tackle.

The main aim of this rig is to keep the bait pinned tight to the seabed during the drift. The lead weight and trace components are standard turbot fishing fare – a big watch lead and a 30lb main trace body, to which you'd normally attach your hook. This rig differs by having a twisty lead weight at the end of the trace body with a 10-inch hooklength made from coated wire, on to which the hook is crimped.

It makes perfect sense to me – for decades I've been using wire booms with two-inch hooklengths attached when fishing for soles, purely to keep the bait nailed down. I'll certainly be giving this rig a thorough testing myself next month when the big turbot are set to return to our shores.

TACKLING UP

You don't need to use fancy rigs for turbot in order to catch them, but as you have read, Simon's new rig is worth investigating. All I normally use is a simple running leger tied up with three feet of 30lb fluorocarbon with a size 5/0 hook on the end.

As far as rods and reels go for this type of fishing, you need to use a 12lb or 20lb-class set-up, just in case you do hook into that beast. I like to use a heavy spinning rod and fixed-spool reel when the tide isn't ripping through, and I've boated turbot to 16lb on that kit. Other than that it's my trusty DBI 10-20lb class boat rod for when the tides are stronger or I'm fishing the offshore banks in 150ft+ of water.

Either a fixed-spool reel or small multiplier loaded with 30lb braid is ideal. It's a good idea to use a 30lb fluorocarbon leader too – the length of the rod plus 5ft will cover you. This is especially useful when fishing in shallower, clear water.

For the most part you'll be using lead weights in the 4oz to 12oz range, depending on where you are fishing, the size of the tide and strength of wind that's affecting the speed of the drift. ►



Watch leads are perfect for deepwater drift fishing



It's this twisty weight, which really does the business

A 20lb-class boat rod or uptider is ideal for drifting in deep water



Simon's baited rig – note the wire hooklength

BAITING GAME

There are two great baits as far as turbot go. The first is mackerel. You can use this in a number of ways. A long, thin strip of fresh mackerel (the silver belly often being preferred) is a brilliant bait. It's even more effective if you remove most of the flesh to leave a wafer-thin strip that looks almost like skin without any flesh attached!

Another great use of mackerel is a whole fillet. This works well when the water is really dirty. It probably has more to do with scent than anything else, but again this bait works very well if you remove the bulk of the flesh.

The other top bait is a cocktail of a mackerel belly strip and either a small sandeel or a fillet of launce. Both have their day, so it's simply a case of experimenting and seeing which one works best when you're out fishing.

The main thing to remember though, is that both baits need to be hooked very lightly – this is done by literally by nicking the point of the hook through the thin end of the mackerel strip and either the head of the sandeel, or tail section of the launce fillet.



Catching fresh mackerel is always a good start to the day



Fresh mackerel fillets cut lengthways are a superb flattie bait

Left: Catching fresh mackerel is always a good start to the day

Right: That's as simple as it gets – hooked once through the thin end of the tail



Sandeel and launce are excellent turbot baits



Dave Harper with one of the first turbot of the trip

IT TAKES TIME

The method for catching turbot on the drift requires concentration. Most of the time you'll be drifting quite quickly over rippled sandbanks, and it's easy to imagine that every bump you feel is the makings of a bite.

There's no mistaking a turbot bite though, and you'll either feel the fish hit your bait with a solid thump or your rod tip will rattle like mad. In both cases it's essential to pay out line as soon as you feel the makings of a bite – even if you're not sure.

It's for this reason that you always keep your reel out of gear. Once you've dropped your bait to the seabed, pay off a little line to get a decent angle in your mainline, then use your thumb as a brake on the spool if your using a multiplier - or forefinger if you're using a fixed-spool reel. As soon as you feel a bite, lift your thumb and count to five, then re-engage the spool. If there is a turbot on the end, you'll know about it. If not, just carry on fishing as you were.

Large turbot will nail a big bait and swallow it whole in seconds, but the smaller fish often grab half the bait, which is why it's important to give as little resistance as possible and let the fish take the bait properly for a few seconds.

During this trip we were fishing in excess of 150 feet of water, but even in that depth you can still feel the little rattles and bumps of the seabed, and there's no mistaking a bite when it comes, thanks to the use of braided mainline. Braid really is essential for this type of fishing if you want to feel every bump and pluck. ■



Simon Adams caught more turbot than anyone while using his new rig

TURBOT FACTS

■ They feed mostly on other fish such as sandeels, sprats and whiting, but they will also eat crustaceans and molluscs.

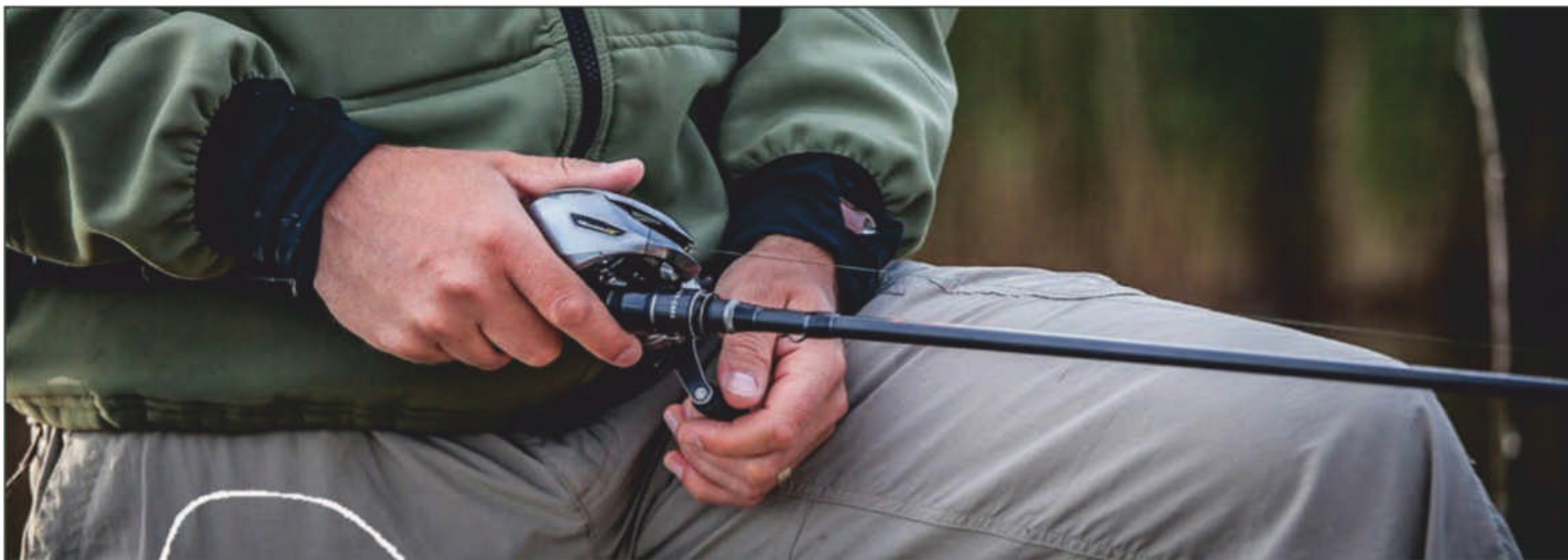
■ Turbot can be caught all around the UK and Ireland, but most are found along the south coast.

■ They don't have scales on their skin – instead they have boney tubercles.

■ When breeding, the female can produce up to 15-million eggs.

■ They can withstand brackish water and will venture into estuaries.

■ They prefer a sandy/hard mud seabed, and can be caught in water from 15ft to over 200ft deep.



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The Learning Curve



Ray enthusiast and first-time boat angler Tom England sets out to improve on his shore catches

Left: Tom's first blonde ray of the charter trip

Above right: A 9lb 9oz conger and one of the many smoothhounds

BEING A SHORE ANGLER ON MAINLY rocky marks, boat fishing is something I have never previously done, but that changed in June. Because of lockdown I missed out a huge chunk of my fishing season but, most importantly, I missed the peak time for rays at my local beaches.

I was gutted because my aim for the year was to catch a decent ray to beat the 3lb spotted I'd caught in 2019. Scrolling through social media, I came across plenty of catch reports from the boats, so I contacted a local charter company in Penarth. It was the same boat that my friend, Lee Glyn, had been on previously and caught rays, dogfish, bull huss, conger eels and smoothhounds during an action-packed day.

Skipper Darren Ryan had a vacancy for June 15, which gave me a week to prepare for my first boat session. Darren owns Sea Leopard, an Evolution 33 with a 450hp Iveco engine. His dad was a skipper too, so Darren has been boating most of his life, although he used to play rugby professionally for Cardiff Blues. Ending his rugby career around five years ago, he followed his dream of full-time chartering. Trips cost about £50 a person, which is a great price for a good day's fishing.

With a place on the boat booked, I looked up tips on boat fishing and the rigs to use. I decided to buy a boat rod, even though the skipper offers rod and reel rental for £5. My local tackle shop had an Abu GT30 for £25 that caught my eye, so I read some reviews of this 30/50lb-class rod and it seemed like a



Hounds were plentiful for Corey Williams too

good buy. I already had a fixed-spool reel.

Rigs were the biggest challenge because I had no idea, although I narrowed it down to a running leger, with the weight carried on a 25cm sliding boom. I decided on a 2-3ft trace of 50lb line with size 7/0 and 5/0 hooks in a Pennell. I later found out that the trip could produce some

tope, so I made some tope rigs, which would double up for huss and eels too. I made three wire traces and three using 150lb line.

Next I needed some frozen bait, and managed to get some joey mackerel, sandeels and unwashed squid. Thankfully, the day before the trip I obtained some fresh peeler crabs too. ▶



This 13lb 8oz huss put up an amazing fight



Corey with a lovely thornback

FIRST FISH

I had to get to Penarth in time for the boat to pass through the lock gate by 7am, and arrived with half-an-hour to spare, which gave me a chance to speak to the skipper. I was nervous about the potential of being seasick, but thankfully it was a calm day with only a 5mph wind with the temperature predicted at 27°C.

Ninety minutes later we arrived at Stout Point for our first stop. Within minutes all six anglers were into fish, including a few strap conger eels before it got really interesting.

Soon I had a run. My reel was screaming so I tightened the drag and hooked into a fish, which had taken my crab bait. I guessed it was either a bass or smoothhound, and soon a hound of 9lb 7oz was aboard. I was delighted with my first fish off the boat.

For the next two hours we caught fish after

fish, each boating four hounds, with the biggest weighing 12lb 8oz. Other species included conger eels and dogfish, until Andrew Jenkins boated the first ray of the day, a 9lb thornback. It's a stunning sight to see a ray surface, but even better watching the fish go back. Sometime later, the skipper decided to take the boat out deeper to the Nash Sands.

Half-an-hour later the vessel was anchored in about 110 feet of water. I was determined to catch a ray, so fished with a whole squid and two sandeels. Within five minutes, the skipper caught a blonde ray right next to the boat.

While this was going on, I noticed some small taps on my rod that I thought were from a dogfish, so I started to reel in and felt a little bit of weight. The fish began to take line, and eventually I managed to bring it closer to the surface and saw it was a blonde ray. The



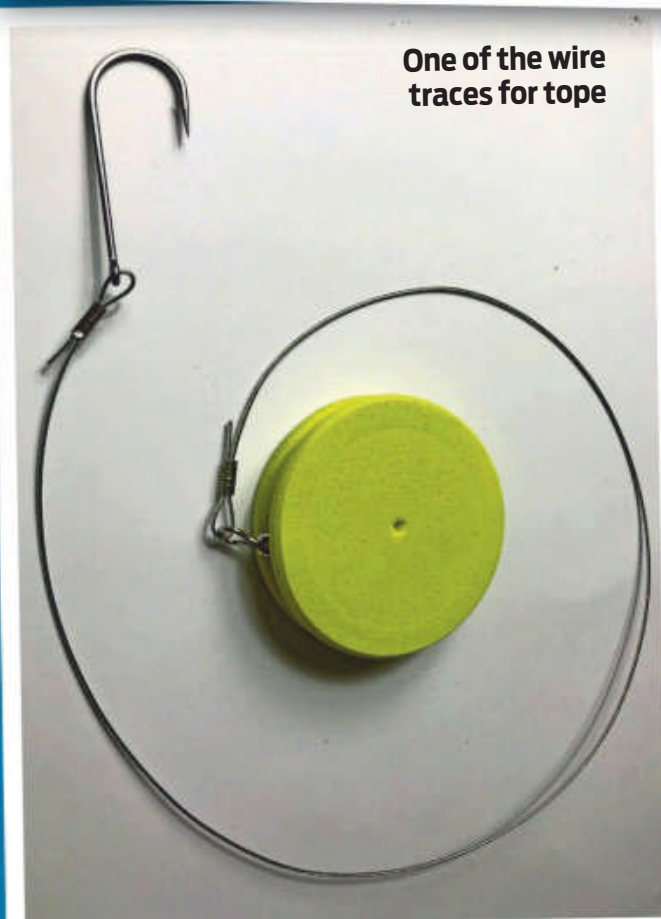
Tom's first boat-caught smoothhound of 9lb 7oz

TOM'S RIG AND BAIT'S

Running leger Pennell rig



One of the wire traces for tope



My squid bait to attract a ray





Rods in the holders waiting for the next fish to bite

adrenaline kicked in and I was shaking with excitement. I had finally got the ray I was targeting. It weighed 13lb 5oz. Immediately afterwards Darren boated a 15lb 2oz blonde.

Not long after this I had a big knock and, after two turns of my reel, the fish took off and snapped me off. Darren said it was tope, so everyone switched to the wire traces baited with a whole Joey mackerel. I cut my bait down the spine and sliced off the tail to stop it spinning under the water.

Everything was quiet for some time until a young Corey Williams hit into a fish, which turned out to be a bull huss, weighing a superb 13lb 4oz. This was Corey's biggest fish.

Soon everyone was catching eels and dogfish, so the plan was to move to our final mark of the day. Just before we could move, I had a run and could feel headshaking on my rod. I knew it was a conger eel and the result was my biggest eel at 9lb 9oz, beating my shore-caught best by 1lb 2oz.

THINKING BIG

The final spot was also on the Nash, but we would drift for 90 minutes before we had to get back to the lock gate. I decided to go big for the final hour.

My plan was to stick out a large mackerel bait

on a tope rig. My first drop produced a greedy dogfish. Half-an-hour later I had another knock from what seemed to be a bigger fish. Reeling in, I could feel some head shaking from a conger eel, this time weighing 5lb.

With only 20 minutes left I wanted to catch my first big bull huss. I continued to use my tope rig with a whole mackerel, which Darren advised me to drop over the side rather than cast out. To my surprise, not even two minutes later I had a fish on. This was an amazing fight and about five minutes later the fish came the surface. My goal has been achieved with a 13lb 8oz huss.

On the way back to Penarth I reflected on the day, the people I had met and the fish I had caught. The atmosphere on the boat was amazing, particularly after some tough months of lockdown. It's always great to try new things. We never stop learning and I can confirm I learned many new things ready for my next trip with Sea Leopard charters.

Not long afterwards I was back for that second trip on what was a very windy day with gusts up to 30mph. Thankfully, I needn't have worried about seasickness again. My highlights of the trip were blonde rays of 15lb and 14lb. I guess I'm a boat angling convert now, but it will go hand in hand with my enthusiasm for shore fishing. ■



The fish certainly test the tackle

A blonde taken on the second trip



NEED TO KNOW

■ Sea Leopard Charters, skipper Darren Ryan, tel: 07729 228797.



FISHEAGLE 2pc Flotation Suit

Fantastic life preservation suit with top quality integrated buoyancy in both the jacket and trousers.

Features: Fully adjustable, Hood, waist, braces, hand and ankle cuffs, crotch strap. Detachable Hood, Fleece lining body/hood and pockets with Safety Whistle, Double fold over pockets, Heavy Duty Double front Zip.

This suit has so many features, too many to list!

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IMAX 2pc Thermo Suit

If you are looking for a warm and waterproof suit but don't want a flotation suit then the IMax Thermo suit is well worth considering. It follows the classic jacket and bib & brace design. The outer shell is 100% water and wind proof and the high collar and detachable hood combine to keep the worst winter weather at bay.

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IRONXPRO Sea Suit

High quality thermal fishing suit to keep you warm, dry and protected on those cold nights on the beach.

RRP £144.99

OUR PRICE

£50

CODE	SIZE
TX5262	L
TX5263	XL
TX5264	2XL



PENN Fathom II Star Drag Multipliers

The second generation PENN® Fathom® II star drag reel is built with a rigid metal frame and sideplates, now with added features to make it more angler friendly than ever.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	PRICE
PE1945	15	290yds/50lb	£169.99
PE1946	15 CS	385yds/50lb	£189.99



DAIWA Sealine Slosch Multipliers

The SL20SH and SL30SH are two top drawer performers boasting powerful, high speed gearing.

RRP £160.00

OUR PRICE

£79.99

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY
DW0631	SL20SH	250m/20lbs
DW0633	SL30SH	300m/20lbs



NON THOMPSON Explore Boat Fishing Combo

- 2pc 6' boat rod (20-30lb)
- Pre-spoiled Multiplier reel (Size 300)
- Quality Lure box
- 5 pc of Norwegian swivel w/snarp
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SV10357

RRP £69.99

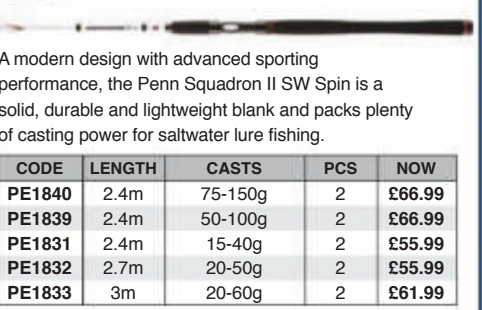
£35



PENN Squadron II SW Spinning Rods

A modern design with advanced sporting performance, the Penn Squadron II SW Spin is a solid, durable and lightweight blank and packs plenty of casting power for saltwater lure fishing.

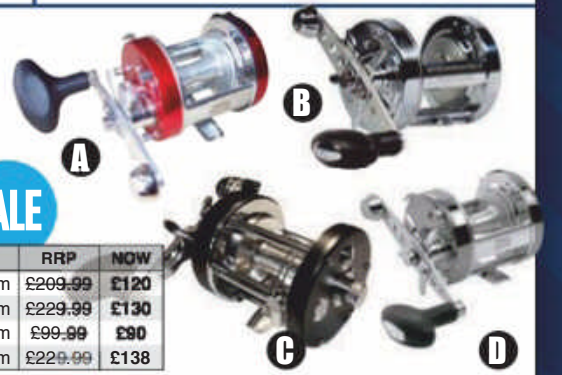
CODE	LENGTH	CASTS	PCS	NOW
PE1840	2.4m	75-150g	2	£66.99
PE1839	2.4m	50-100g	2	£66.99
PE1831	2.4m	15-40g	2	£55.99
PE1832	2.7m	20-50g	2	£55.99
PE1833	3m	20-60g	2	£61.99



Abu Garcia Multiplier Reels

For three generations and beyond, anglers the world over have put their trust in Abu Garcia for fishing tackle that stands their toughest tests. It's a trust that's been earned by building products right the first time, and making them even better time after time.

	CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
A	PU1513	6500C3 CT Mag	200m/0.40mm	£209.99	£120
B	PU1823	6500 CT Chrome Rocket	200m/0.40mm	£229.99	£130
C	PU1820	Ambassadeur Seven	270m/0.45mm	£99.99	£90
D	PU1514	6500C3 CT	200m/0.40mm	£229.99	£138



Century Beach Rods

Tip Tornado Graphex Supermatch Beach
Probably one of the best all round shore rods Century has ever produced.

CODE	LGTH	MODEL	PRICE
CN0180	13ft 6	4-7oz	£499.00

Eliminator T900 Guide Rod
Features Century's STF (spread tow fabric) to improve AT-T ant-tw st.

CODE	LGTH	MODEL	PRICE
CN0114	14ft 4	4-7oz	£549.00

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Shakespeare Ugly Stik GX2 Boat Rods

- Ugly Tech blank construction
- Long tip-Short butt design
- Ugly Stik's famous Clear Tip
- Laser etched EVA foregrip
- 2 piece construction

CODE	MODEL	RRP	NOW
SP3846	7ft4 8-12lb	£74.99	£70.00
SP3446	7ft9 12-20lb	£59.99	£55.00
SP3447	7ft6 20-30lb	£64.99	£60.00
SP3448	7ft4 30-50lb	£69.99	£65.00



IRONXPRO Envoy 7000 FS Reel

Lightweight, powerful and reliable, the Envoy Fixed Spool from Tronixpro is the ideal partner for continental style surf rods, letting you cast to the horizon every time. Features a grippy rubberised handle, lightweight frame, infinite anti-reverse and a powerful drag that'll stop anything that swims. The high capacity spool is built to hold all line you'll need if your catch heads for the horizon.

RRP £54.99

OUR PRICE

£45

CODE	CAPACITY
TX4268	20lb/230yd



SONIK Vader XS Shore Rods

Superb multi modulus carbon fibre two piece blanks with progressive casting action, with sensitive hi-vis tips for bite detection.

OUR PRICES

FROM ONLY

£54.99

CODE	MODEL	PRICE
SO0622	13ft 2pc 4-6oz	£54.99
SO0623	14ft 2pc 4-7oz	£64.99
SO0624	15ft 3pc 4-7oz	£79.99



SONIK SKS Black Shore Rods

Each rod is individually tailored to offer the perfect 'all round' actions, which mean they are as effective on clean ground as they are in heavy terrain.

CODE	LGTH	MODEL	PCS	PRICE
SO0244	12ft	4-6oz	2	£79.99
SO0245	13ft	4-6oz	2	£89.99
SO0246	14ft	5-7oz	2	£99.99



PENN GS 525 MAG3 Series

- Latest version of the classic all round beach casting reel
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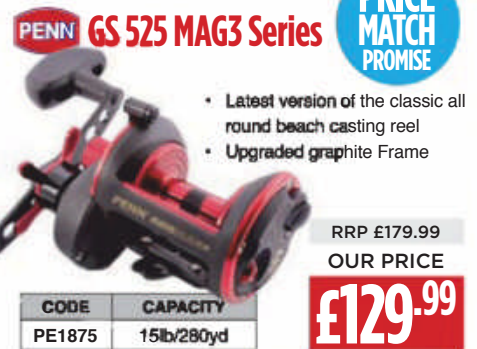
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CODE	CAPACITY
PE1875	15lb/280yd



PENN Surfblaster II Fixed Spool Reel

Ideal for all surf-casting situations over clean and mixed rough ground.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	PRICE
PE1777	7000	330yds/15lb	£109.99	£90.00
PE1778	8000	370yds/15lb	£114.99	£95.00



IRONXPRO Aphex Continental TT



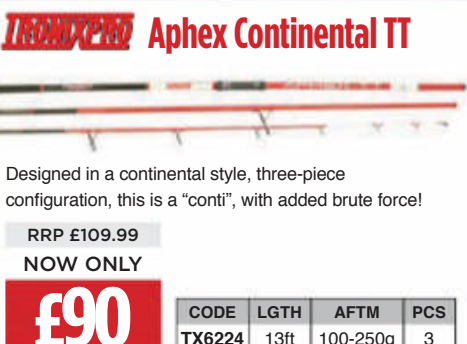
Designed in a continental style, three-piece configuration, this is a "conti", with added brute force!

RRP £109.99

NOW ONLY

£90

CODE	LGTH	AFTM	PCS
TX6224	13ft	100-250g	3

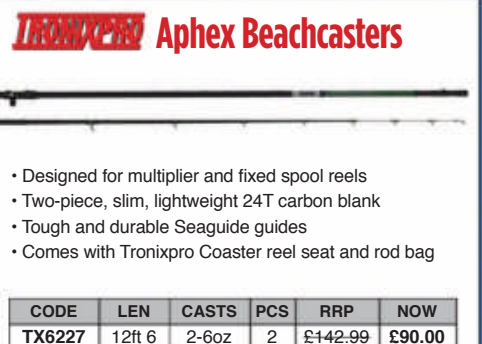


IRONXPRO Aphex Beachcasters



- Designed for multiplier and fixed spool reels
- Two-piece, slim, lightweight 24T carbon blank
- Tough and durable Seaguide guides
- Comes with Tronixpro Coaster reel seat and rod bag

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
TX6227	12ft 6	2-6oz	2	£142.99	£90.00



PENN Fierce III Reels

Featuring a full metal body and sideplate along with PENN HT-100™ carbon fiber drag washers, the Fierce III can handle anything inshore or nearshore.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RATIO	NOW
PE1953	2500	240yds/10lb	6.2:1	£79.99
PE1955	3000	250yds/15lb	6.2:1	£84.99
PE1956	4000	360yds/15lb	6.2:1	£89.99
PE1958	5000	420yds/20lb	5.6:1	£94.99
PE1959	6000	490yds/30lb	5.6:1	£99.99
PE1961	8000	475yds/50lb	5.3:1	£109.99



SHIMANO Speedmaster 14000 XSC

The new version of the 2015 Speecast, strongly updated in specs, features and appearance

SU14166

OUR PRICE

£120

CAPACITY
8kg/400m

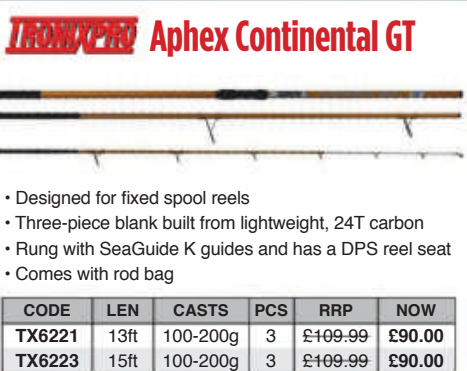


IRONXPRO Aphex Continental GT



- Designed for fixed spool reels
- Three-piece blank built from lightweight, 24T carbon
- Rung with SeaGuide K guides and has a DPS reel seat
- Comes with rod bag

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
TX6221	13ft	100-200g	3	£109.99	£90.00
TX6223	15ft	100-200g	3	£109.99	£90.00



Leeda ICON FXD Sport Beach Rods

- Made from Torayco® carbon
- Fuki K Guides
- Fuji DPS reel seat
- Spliced Carbon hybrid tip
- Ergonomically designed Rubber grips

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
LD14564	16ft	80-180g	3	£279.99	£99.00



SONIK SKS Black Surf 8000

A full-sized surf reel which has been designed to meet the requirements of the UK beach angler.

SO0481

OUR PRICE

£39.99

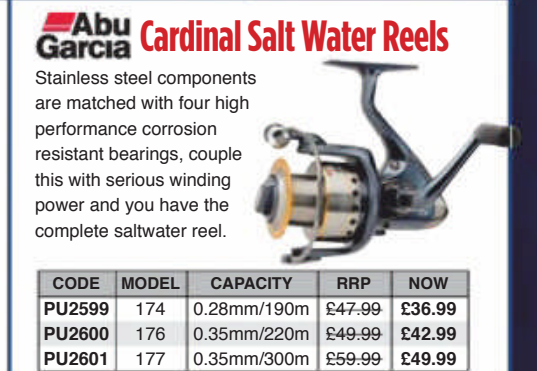
CAPACITY
20lb/220yds



Abu Garcia Cardinal Salt Water Reels

Stainless steel components are matched with four high performance corrosion resistant bearings, couple this with serious winding power and you have the complete saltwater reel.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
PU2599	174	0.28mm/190m	£47.99	£36.99
PU2600	176	0.35mm/220m	£49.99	£42.99
PU2601	177	0.35mm/300m	£59.99	£49.99



PENN Fathom II 15 SD CS Star Drag Casting Special Multiplier

Penn Fathom II Star Drag Casting Special is a high performance reel for the shore angler who is looking for a reel to cast the maximum distance whilst still having the power to handle big fish and tough conditions. With a distinctive 'Blackout' finish it's looks sleek, strong and mean.

PE1946
OUR PRICE

£189.99

CAPACITY	RATIO	WEIGHT
430m / 0.35mm	6.1:1	17.5oz



NEW

PENN Squadron II Labrax Rods

Offering exceptional value for money, the PENN Squadron II series feature modern, two piece, sporting blank actions designed to achieve high performance in both fishing and casting.

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OUR PRICE

£44.99

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	PCS
PE1827	7ft	10-30g	2
PE1828	8ft	14-42g	2

IRONPUNK Rockfish LRF Rods

This sensitive rod can detect shy biting gobies in deep water yet has reserves of power to land bigger fish.

CODE	MODEL	PRICE
TX6238	Heavy 8ft6 5-28g	£39.99
TX6237	Med. Heavy 8ft 5-20g	£37.99
TX4885	Medium Light 7ft10 7-28g	£35.00

FISHEAGLE Travel Match Tripod

This compact yet reliable Tripod from Fisheagle is fantastic for the mobile beach angler. Collapses down to 3ft in length, and extends to a full 5 feet for maximum versatility. Features an all stainless steel construction, heavy duty cups and rests, and in a protective bag.

RE0365
OUR PRICE

£29.99



JD Boat Multipliers

Very strong and reliable ball bearing Level-wind Multiplier.

- Easily adjustable star drag
- Non-slip power handle
- Lightweight frame and spool
- Right hand wind
- Filled with quality mono

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RATIO	RRP	NOW
LI1281	30	20lb/300yds	4.2:1	£39.99	£25.99
LI1282	50	30lb/330yds	5.2:1	£44.99	£26.99



Dave Barham Sea Fishing Series

SALE

Over the years Dave Barham has helped to develop numerous ranges of rods and tackle for other companies, but has been unable to put his name to them due to his position as editor of Total Sea Fishing & Boat Fishing Monthly.

Now he's finally free to launch his own range of rods, with all manner of tackle, clothing and other kit in the pipeline. It's exciting to say the least.



NOW FROM

£60

CODE	MODEL	LENGTH	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
TX4719	Boat	8ft 8	10-20lb	2	£179.99	£80.00
TX4721	Travel	7ft	7-35g	4	£149.99	£60.00

Shakespeare Omni Mackerel Rod

Shakespeare's Omni Range is ideal for beginners and more experienced anglers alike, these rods maximise performance and quality at this key price point.

These rods are superb for fishing feathers and baits off rock marks or piers on a sunny afternoon.

RRP £34.99
OUR PRICE

£23.99

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	PCS
SP3341	10ft	4-8oz	2

Ninja FD Spinning Reels

Quite simply the Ninja reels are staggeringly good.

OUR PRICES
FOR ONLY

£59.99



SHIMANO STC Boat & Spin Rods

The STC Boat rods are the ultimate sea spinning rods and cater for both shore and boat fishing situations.

CODE	MODEL	LENGTH	CAP	PCS	PRICE
SU12363	Spin	2.5m	14-40g	6	£159.99
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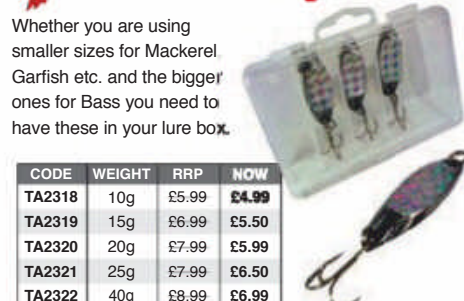
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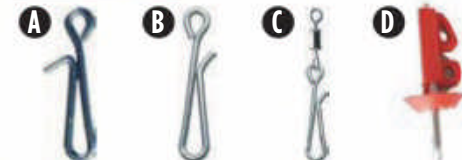
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A fish of cooler seas, the halibut ranks as one of the great species of saltwater sport fish and, often considered the hardest fighter

HALIBUT ARE NOT SIMPLY overgrown flounders that spend their lives grubbing about on the seabed foraging for scraps, or lying in wait behind the crest of a sandbank waiting for the tide to deliver their food to them.

The truth is quite the opposite. Halibut are an extremely active and highly aggressive predatory species, a fish that when hooked will undoubtedly rip many yards of line off your reel, while testing your knot-tying skills to the absolute limit.

I'd say that halibut rank as one of the great species of saltwater sport fish, arguably the hardest-fighting fish that are found in the cooler seas of the more northerly latitudes.

There are two species of true halibut – the Atlantic halibut (*Hippoglossus hippoglossus*) which is found in the North Atlantic, and the Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*), which lives in the North Pacific Ocean, and both grow to a considerable size. The IGFA all-tackle record for Atlantic halibut is held with a fish that weighed 418lb 13oz, which was caught in 2004 at Vannaya, Norway. The largest Pacific halibut was caught in 1996 at Dutch Harbour, Alaska, and weighed an incredible 459lb. Larger fish of both species, including specimens over 500lb, have been caught commercially.

Halibut are found over a wide range of seabed types, but mostly favour sand, shingle and areas of mixed ground, interspersed with isolated areas of reef. They can be caught at almost all depths ranging from the many hundreds of feet, typically found within Norwegian Fjords, to relatively shallow sandy bays, where, on



Rubber shads are ideal for catching halibut

occasions, they can actually be observed on the bottom in clear water. The latter case is most common during high summer when halibut certainly move into shallower water.

TOP TACTICS

Halibut eat almost anything they can find. Mostly their diet consists of various types of fish including species such as cod, herring, coalfish and many other species of flatfish.

They also feed on all types of crustaceans and, given the chance, even diving seabirds such as puffins. One manufacturer has produced a lure that perfectly replicates these comical sea parrots.

When targeting halibut, it is important to remember that you are fishing for a very active predatory species, which unlike other species of flatfish can, and often are, caught throughout the entire water column. ►



Halibut are caught at various depths

I have caught them on lures working less than 50 feet below the surface, in areas where the water depth was several hundred feet. I have heard several reports from anglers fishing in Norway who have witnessed halibut feeding on bait balls of coalfish or herring right at the surface.

My preferred way to catch halibut is to use large rubber shads. These are very effective, easy to use and can be worked with great effect throughout the water column. Other anglers use bait for halibut, usually from a drifting boat, but you should note that the use of livebait is prohibited in Norway. Large fillets of cut bait, or perhaps better still the head and guts from a fish make a very effective bait; salmon heads are widely used in British Columbia and Alaska.

In recent years anglers have started float-fishing for halibut with much success. The rig is simply a standard sliding float, with a stop knot keeping the bait suspended at the required depth. Other anglers successfully target halibut by trolling large diving plugs.

DESTINATIONS

Norway is the number one destination for most British anglers looking to catch a halibut. The central area of the coastline around Bodo is very popular with shore anglers, who catch an impressive number of halibut.

For your best chance of success if fishing from the shore, it really is necessary to book a guide, at least for your first trip as the techniques used are quite specialised, and location, as always, is a vital factor.

Halibut are caught from all of the fish camp areas in northern Norway, notably those in



These big fish will also take metal lures

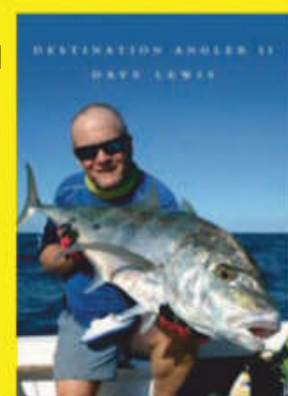
the Troms district, which is where the world record was caught. Most of these areas are fished aboard self-drive boats, though guides/skippers are available in some areas, and well worth considering. Iceland and the Faroe Islands also produce plenty of halibut, as do the Shetland Islands.

By far the most productive halibut fishing I have experienced has been in Canada's British Columbia, and I've heard that the fishing further north in Alaska is as good or even better. Here, both baits and lures are used with equal success.

From my experience, catching halibut in the North Pacific is almost guaranteed, the only variable being the size of fish you catch. On those days I have fished here I have always caught several fish, and I would go so far as

to say that adding this much-coveted tick to your species list is pretty much guaranteed. ■

Dave Lewis's recently published book, 'Destination Angler 2', features 26 beautifully illustrated chapters covering fishing for many of our bucketlist species at destinations around the world. Treat yourself to a copy of our contributor's superb book. The cost is £30 plus £3.99 p&p to a UK address.





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SEA SCHOOL

21 PAGES TO MAKE YOU A BETTER ANGLER

Words and photography
by Dave Barham

GET INTO BOAT FISHING PART 15

BANKING FOR BASS

Dave Barham loves his shallow water bass fishing. Here's how he targets those gleaming silver bars with light tackle...

THE THAMES ESTUARY, along with the Bristol Channel, Humber and many other tidal river systems are typical of most marks where bass are a spring, summer and autumn species. Get the right mark on the right day and they can be caught in huge numbers, with monster double-figure fish always on the cards, even in just a few feet of water.

Most of these early fish are what we call school bass or 'schoolies'. They rarely reach

above 5lb, but the average size can be good, often around 3lb, depending on where you target them.

One of my favourite tactics is to anchor in front of a sandbank, often one that dries out at low water, and then fish worm or squid baits back towards it. It's here that the bass patrol as the tide begins to flood, and in some cases where the sandbank is a big one, the bass congregate and wait for the tide to cover the bank in order to get up on to it and feed.





THE RIGHT TIME

Getting in position early is essential in order to capitalise on your day's fishing. Try to creep up to your chosen bank at the very start of the flood tide, which may mean arriving an hour or two at the end of the ebb and nudging the boat on to the mud or sand as the tide goes out.

You need to anchor 20 or so yards in front of the bank, so you can cast your rig to the edge of the bank as the tide begins to flood. You may be anchored in 12ft of water, but you want your bait to be fishing in 3-4ft of water at the edge of the bank.

As the tide pushes, and the bank starts to cover, you will need to let out some anchor rope in order to keep you within casting distance of the 'hit zone'. It's trial and error, but the more you do it, the more you'll get to understand how the bass behave on your particular bank. We often lift the anchor after a couple of hours of the flood and move in a bit closer to intercept the bass moving over the top of the bank – that's a good trick to remember.

SEA SCHOOL

GET INTO BOAT FISHING

Light spinning gear is the way forward



KEEP IT LIGHT

As far as tackle goes, it's all about using light lure rods for me. More recently I've been using my own DB4 10-40g lure rod for bait fishing, but anything in the 8-10ft length range with a cast rating of between 10-60g will be spot on. I even use a four-piece 7-28g travel lure rod when it's flat calm, and that gives excellent sport.

I tend to go for 20lb braid for mainline, with a suitably long 20lb fluorocarbon leader to absorb the powerful lunges from the hooked fish and to prevent any 'scare' issues with the braid if the water is clear (not very common in the Thames).

Using light tackle, especially braid, means that you can get away with using much lighter lead weights, which in turn gives you more of a sense of what's going on at the business end when you hook a fish – it's as simple as that.

RIG & BAIT

Keeping things simple is best. Just thread a lead link on your mainline, followed by a bead, then a swivel, to which three feet of 20lb fluorocarbon hooklength is tied, finishing off with a size 2/0 fine wire Sakuma Manta hook.

I like to use flat watch leads, which I have in 2oz, 3oz and 4oz sizes. The reason for this is that the flat lead is more workable and will keep your bait in exactly the right spot every time. Once you have cast out, you lift your rod tip and let out a bit more line as the lead weight gets picked up by the tide and travels further away from you towards the edge of the bank. Keep doing this and you will reach the critical point where your lead weight doesn't move anymore.

If the fishing is slow, I'll slap on a rolling

bomb and cast that out, again lifting the rod tip and letting out line to bounce the lead weight back towards the edge of the bank. However, when I reach the 'stop' point, I'll let off more slack line and allow the tide to roll the lead weight around, searching out any depressions or tiny gullies.

These shallow-water bass are often there to search for worm baits, shrimps and small crabs. You can pick them up on squid, but you'll catch far more on either fresh blow lugworms or ragworms.

I much prefer using large ragworms, because you only need to use a single worm for each bait and it gives great presentation. The bass obviously love them too, because they tend to inhale them.

A simple running leger and watch lead works wonders



Freshly dug blow lug is a brilliant bait for shallow water



Sometimes a single lugworm will catch the biggest bass



A big, single ragworm is Dave's favourite bass bait for shallow water

PLAYING A FISH

Bass give two types of bite in shallow water – either you will just get a couple of nods on the rod tip, or your rod tip will simply slam over as the bass scoffs your bait and bolts off.

If the bass are being finicky, you will need to pick up your rod and feel for the bite to develop. Then simply wind down and strike into the fish. If it's not there, drop it back immediately and the bass will often come back for another look. Either way you must make sure that once you have cast in, you back off the drag so that the bass can take line freely or you may well lose your rod and reel over the side.



They don't all have to be huge to make Dave smile

Words by John Holden, image by Lloyd Rogers

SWING THE LEAD

This simple guide will show you how pendulum casting works



PENDULUM CASTING SHARES ITS KEY points with off-ground styles. The big difference is the obvious one: in pendulum styles the sinker is swinging win the air when the main action begins.

Visualise the layout of an off-ground style – rod, leader and sinker positions – then mentally raise them off the beach as a single unit, lifting the sinker itself a little higher than the rod tip. The swing that controls this aerial layout's accuracy is extremely important, for the split-second positioning of sinker relative to rod tip is usually what makes or breaks the rest of the casting action.

The aim is...

- 1** To create the right sinker resistance so that the rod begins to load quickly and smoothly.
- 2** To make the best use of body and arm power.
- 3** Automatically to move the sinker on to the correct path relative to the rod tip when the power begins to flow.

This might sound technical, but, with pendulum style, focusing on those three points always pay off. How far should I wind up my body when I set up the cast? Where should the rod be when I make the swing? Where should the sinker be at the end of the swing?

Solid answers to those questions set us free to experiment further to find what variation on the theme suits us best. Personal style involves blending a few key points into a system that lets us get the best from ourselves and our tackle. Copying somebody else rarely works.

STARTING POINT

The compact fishing pendulum technique is a good place to start. Even there, it's important to experiment with the initial set-up and swing. You need to find a good spot for the sinker to hover in mid-air at the end of the inswing, in order to create the right amount of resistance for the rod tip to bend quickly and firmly when the main move starts.

This is exactly the same principle used in

setting up for a ground cast, and it is the first step to master if you aim to be a good pendulum caster. Get it right, and what follows is almost sure to flow at least smoothly enough to give a nice reliable cast.

Mastering a simple swing opens the door to the powerful big-swing pendulum styles. More power and more control mean bigger distances, of course. Far more important for many of us – and one reason to favour pendulum over off-ground – is that the technique can be adapted to get the best from a wide range of tackle, rods in particular. Practice and experimentation tell you what the settings should be for your favourite rod and reel.

Swing control is a great tuning aid as well. A little extra body turn in the set-up, a slightly shorter drop and an inswing that brings the sinker closer to the rod all increase the initial resistance and extract better performance from a soft rod. Less body turn, increased leader drop and an inswing a shade farther away from the rod can turn a viciously quick and stiff rod into a pussycat. ■

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SHORE SPECIES SPOTLIGHT Part 13

BALLAN WRASSE

If you're looking for a fight, look no further than these battling bruisers



ONE of our most common species and well distributed right around the UK and Ireland, ballan wrasse are a muscular fish that have evolved to live in turbulent surging water adjacent to hard structures. Pound for pound, they fight exceptionally hard.

WHEN & WHERE

In mild winters, wrasse can be taken almost all-year round, especially in deeper water off the south-western coasts of the West Country, Wales, the west of Scotland and around much of the Irish coast.

That said, wrasse are very susceptible to cold inshore water temperatures, especially when this occurs as a sudden drop. In colder winters they move offshore into much deeper water with a more constant temperature.

The best period for wrasse fishing is from April through to November, with peak time for big fish being from August to November.

Wrasse inhabit a wide range of ground features, being found around pier and jetty supports, alongside harbour walls and among kelp weed beds. Their natural home, though, is along the edge of rocks at the base of sea-facing cliffs. The bigger wrasse are territorial and take up station in favoured areas and work

a set area back and forth searching for food. Smaller fish tend to be more tolerant of each other and are happy to compete.

Tides are not overly important for wrasse to feed, but they do like a little flow in the tide, meaning they feed best during the running flood and ebb tide. The flood tide, though, is often the best. Calmer seas are needed for angler safety, but wrasse do like some

movement in the sea to feed at their best. Very heavy, stormy seas will push the fish out deeper and it takes a few days for them to return inshore as things settle down. Coloured water is also not conducive to good wrasse fishing.

They will feed even in bright daylight, but as is so often the case with fish close inshore, more subdued days with cloud cover will tend to fish best.



Ballan wrasse fight exceptionally hard for their size



TACKLE & RIGS

Due to the power of wrasse, you need a strong rod such as a 2-4oz bass rod with some guts in the lower mid-section and butt. One with a semi-supple (not soft) tip often has the edge when fishing with braid. It adds a hint more sensitivity to your overall bite detection and your ability to 'feel' the lead weight as it is lifted and dropped and banging bottom if you are leger fishing on a tight line.

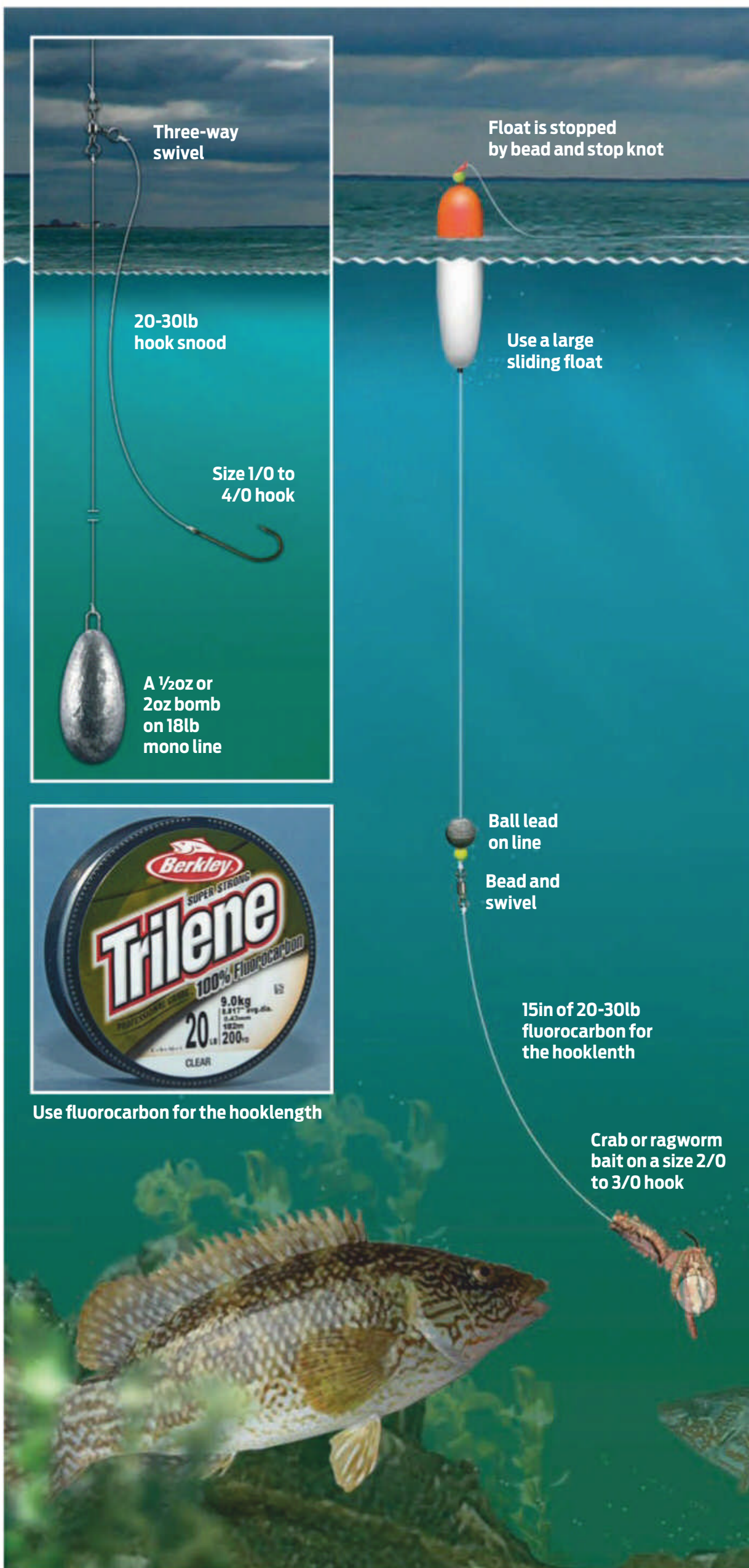
Add a 4000-sized fixed-spool reel loaded with 30lb braid (*pictured above*) and you have the ideal combination for putting real pressure on a big wrasse.

An easy way to rig for bottom-feeding wrasse is to tie a three-way swivel to the end of the mainline. Add 20 inches of 18lb mono to the bottom eye of the swivel and tie on the weight, usually a ½oz to 2oz bomb, to this. The 12-inch hook trace is tied to the middle swivel eye and should be 20lb to 30lb fluorocarbon for its abrasion resistance. Hook size depends on the bait size, but use hooks between size 1/0 and 4/0 depending on the fish targeted. Mustad Viking 79515 hooks are the choice for the majority of wrasse anglers.

You can use old spark plugs, or old nuts and bolts, to save on weights. In very snaggy water, use a short, weak link of 15lb line to the weight to make it sacrificial should it get stuck, to save fish and tackle.



Float-fishing is often the best way to target wrasse as the bait is suspended up off the bottom and acts naturally as the float lifts and drops in the wave surge. Slide a 5mm bead on to the mainline, followed by a cigar-shaped float, a round ball-weight big enough to cock the float, another 5mm bead, and then tie on a size 2 swivel. To the swivel, add 15 inches of 20-30lb fluorocarbon and the hook. Above the top bead, tie on a five-turn grinner-type stop knot using Powergum or mono. This can be slid up or down the line to set the float depth.



SEA SCHOOL

GREAT SKILLS FOR CATCHING MORE FISH



Crabs are the best bait



Pass hook through rear and back of the crab

BEST BAIT CHOICES

The top choice for catching big wrasse is either a whole hardback crab about the size of a 50p piece, or half a bigger crab. Wrasse have big teeth, and bait presentation is not really an issue. They just chomp the crab down to size, usually in the first hit.

Pass the hook through the rear belly and back of a whole crab and leave the hook point clear. However, if you are missing bites, take the legs off a smaller crab, leaving just three or four legs on the one side. Put the hook through the body then tie the legs up the shank of the hook with bait elastic. This forces the wrasse to take from the hook end.

Lugworms and ragworms are good baits too, but tend to interest the smaller wrasse. Fish bait is not overly effective for inshore wrasse, but a sandeel can sometimes be a good option, especially in the autumn. Other baits such as limpets, mussels and prawns will also catch fish.



Worm baits tend to catch the smaller wrasse



This is typical wrasse country

TOP TACTICS

When fishing off piers, jetties and harbour walls, the wrasse will be tight into the wall itself, or close to the structural supports, unless rougher ground extends out from the wall. Keep the tackle and baits near the wall or structure for the best results.

If there is rougher ground present extending seawards, then thoroughly search this area, working away from the wall as fewer anglers will fish this ground, and it gives you a chance of a better fish.

Breakwaters made from big stones are brilliant for wrasse that live in the holes between the stones. To fish this effectively, you need to risk tackle and have the bait in and around the holes towards the base of the rocks. This is where the bigger fish live.

Float-fishing is ideal for this, aiming to set the bait to fish 12 inches above the holes in the rocks. Be prepared for savage takes and

keep the fish out of the holes, if possible.

If the light levels are bright when fishing from rock ledges into deeper water, then fish a legered bait. If it is cloudy, the float is often better as the fish are higher up in the water. Look for areas where the rocks cut back in towards the cliffs. Wrasse love deeper gullies, and these are again the ideal place to work a float-fished crab, as are undercut rock ledges.

You'll usually catch two or three wrasse from one small section of rock, then bites slow and it is time to move on to the next bit. If you keep catching small wrasse, then a bigger fish is unlikely. The bigger fish tend to come from small holes, gullies cut back into the rock, or from submerged big boulders at the base of the cliff edge. These small areas are easier for the single big wrasse to police, and keep the smaller wrasse away. Identify these holding holes and you'll see a major increase in the size of wrasse you catch. ■



A lovely example of a ballan wrasse

RAYS

Expert filleter Kevin Todd demonstrates how to fillet a ray, often called skate



1



Before you begin, sharpen your knife with a few strokes on either a steel or a stone. A blunt knife is useless for filleting fish.

2



Grip skin between your thumb and forefinger and carefully insert the knife's point between the ray's tough skin and white meat beneath.

3



Use the filleting knife to start separating the tough and slippery skin from the white meat across the full length of the ray's wing.

4



Holding the white meat firmly down with one hand, start pulling the skin away, working towards the outer edge of the wing. Getting started is the hard bit, because it does take a fair amount of force to pull the skin away. Holding the skin with either a clean cloth or a piece of kitchen roll will help you maintain a grip on the slippery skin.

5



You can either leave the belly skin in place or remove it in exactly the same way as the back skin. The meat you are left with is very firm, ideal for shallow frying in butter – the classic way to prepare skate.

ODOUR EATING

If your ray wings smell of ammonia, then they will probably taste of it, which is far from ideal, and perhaps the reason why rays are not as popular as other fish.

If the wings have even a hint of an ammonia smell, you can remove this by soaking the skinned pieces in strongly acidulated cold water (vinegar is perfect) for about half-an-hour.



Words and photography by Nev Broad

TRY SALTWATER FLY-FISHING PART 4

MULLET ON THE FLY

Stealth is the key when setting out to catch these wary fish

MANY ANGLERS consider mullet to be the closest UK species to the bonefish, especially in terms of their feeding and spirited, challenging runs once caught on a fly-rod. It's therefore not surprising that many saltwater fisherman now are equally as addicted to the

pursuit of catching a mullet on the fly.

The credit due to Colin Macleod, and other great mullet anglers, including Darren Jackson and Joe Walker, is justly huge for transforming this area of saltwater fly-fishing.

Up to 2009 only a handful of anglers were turning their attentions to the potential

of catching mullet on the fly. That same year, Colin turned his attention to mullet fly-fishing in the UK, revising fly-patterns, including the flexi-worm (similar to the Apps bloodworm), and creating his own shrimp flies. Around 2010, the slight modification of a trout fly called the Diawl Bach further confirmed that mullet could be caught on the fly.



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SPECIES & LOCATION

There are three main species of mullet in the UK – the thick-lipped, thin-lipped and golden grey.

Thin-lipped are the first to return after winter spawning, typically arriving at our southern shores and entering tidal rivers around March and April. It is identified by its thin top lip and a black spot in front of its pectoral fins. They seem to prefer areas of mud containing shrimps.

Thick-lipped arrive around May, or earlier if the winter has been mild. These can be just at home in open coastal waters as they are in tidal rivers. Thick lips are most easily identified by their tyre-like thick upper lip.

Golden greys have a later arrival of June or July. They are identified by the gold/yellow fingerprint-sized spot on each gill cover. They shoal along shallow, sandy bays and sandbanks as well as shallow surf beaches.

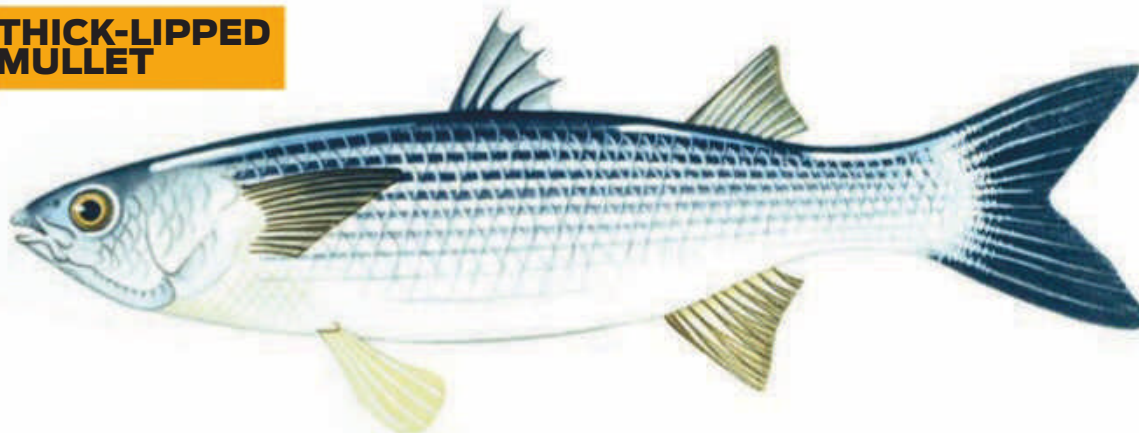
All mullet species are catchable on the fly. You just need patience, the right location, and an understanding of what time of the tide they competitively feed, to swing the odds in your favour. There must be a ready availability of food, including shrimps and worms, to instigate feeding.

Water temperatures of above 10°C kickstart the food chain for mullet feeding, therefore the South West and North West coasts may well bear the first chances of success. A warm summer and mild autumn can see mullet stay well into November. Large estuaries can hold all three species, depending on the stage of the tide, the location, and/or time of year.

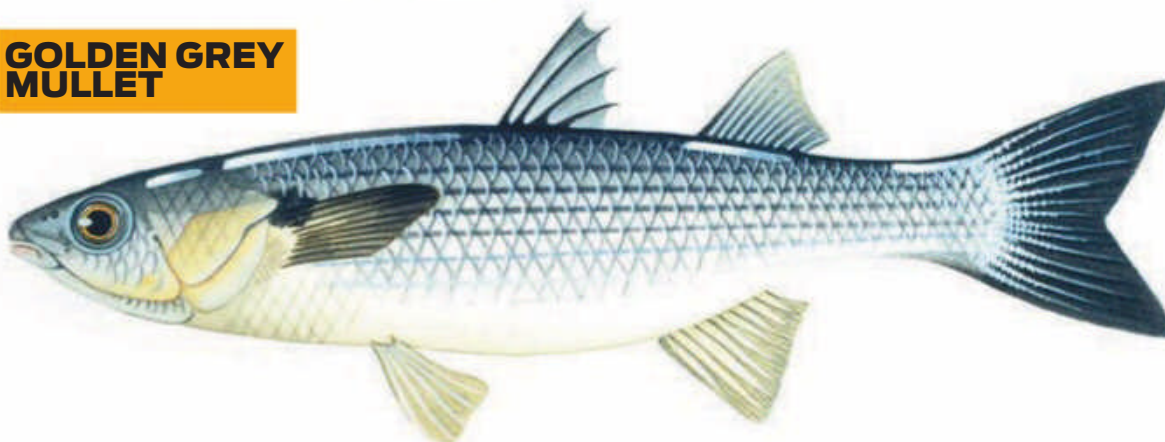
THIN-LIPPED MULLET



THICK-LIPPED MULLET



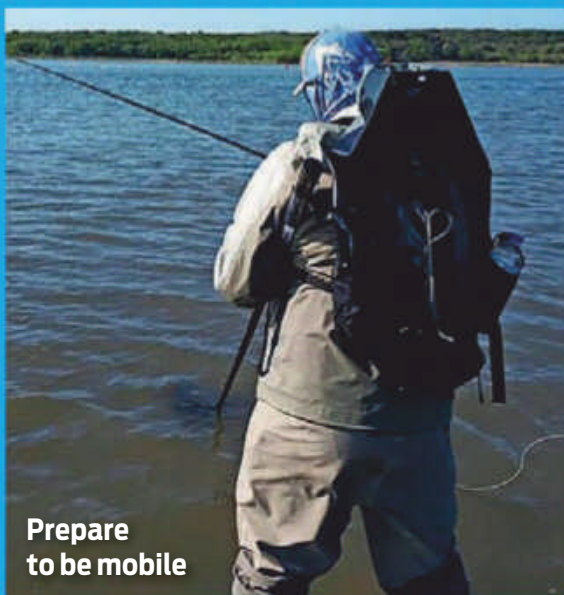
GOLDEN GREY MULLET



TACKLING UP FOR MULLET

The set-up is simple. A six-weight medium to fast action fly-rod coupled with a reel capable of taking 200 metres of 20lb backing plus a six-weight forward (WF) floating fly-line (match the rod) being a typical set-up. My gear is an Orvis Recon 9ft, six-weight paired with a size IV Orvis Hydros reel.

The leader is typically between 8-12lb of fluorocarbon, depending on location and size of the mullet. I fish a team of flies on a



Prepare to be mobile

Thin-lipped caught on a Tagged Romys dropper



12-14ft leader, consisting of a point fly and a dropper half way. A dropper fly will typically be a shrimp pattern, and the dropper length no more than four inches to avoid tangles during casting.

Consider using rig winders with ready-made leaders containing various fly combinations, to simply loop-to-loop to aid rapid

changeover of your fly combinations.

Keep the rod low and strip strike for a more effective hook-up. When you hook a mullet, prepare for a ride, and ensure your drag is set accordingly.

Keep your reel hand away from the reel handle when the fish shoots off on one of its many surging runs for freedom.

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RED TAGGED SPECTRA SHRIMP

TACTICS AND FLY CHOICE

First, locate an area where mullet are feeding. Competitive feeding increases your chances of catching and is indicated by the mullet turning on their side so that you will see flashes of silver as they chase their prey.

Other sure indications of feeding fish are tails and/or fins coming out of the water. The fact you can sight-fish mullet is one reason the sport has become so popular.

Each species requires its own tactical focus, however, one common essential factor is to minimise spooking mullet. This is achieved in a couple of ways. First try to create a low profile. Consider casting from shallow water on your knees, preferably with the sun facing you. Second, avoid your usual overhead-style fly cast, and instead cast to the side with the

rod lower to the water. This will avoid the glare and shadow from the rod and line. As you wade be as quiet as possible.

Selectafly (www.selectafly.com) sells a pack of saltwater mullet flies of different varieties, some of which are described below. Change flies until you start getting bites, and take a couple of rig winders of pre-wound leaders with different fly options.

For targeting specific species, I recommend the following:

■ **Thin-lipped mullet:** You will tend to find shoals seeking food drifting down from rivers and current. They can also roam the mud banks in only inches of water when in a feeding frenzy. They take pulled flies imitating fleeing food. Use a small, steady stripping of the fly-line. Drift the flies in

among them and then start to strip the line back.

Use any shrimp pattern around size 12 with a red tag (a wool end/tail). Examples include red-tagged versions of diawl bach, flexi shrimp, mud shrimp, Romy's Sand Shrimp, Spectra Shrimp, or a two-tone Silica Shrimp.

■ **Thick-lipped mullet:** Dead drifting flies in a current can have devastating results, where the fly is mimicking a dead organism drifting past the active fish feeding in moving water. Flies can be retrieved short and slow, dropping flies carefully in front of fish, or sometimes speed up the retrieve if the mullet are non-committal. Alternatively, allow the flies to



Store your flies and leaders on a rig winder

drift to the feeding fish.

Suitable patterns are an Apps Bloodworm or Flexible Fiend (point fly), Corophium, Czech Nymph, Ghostbuster, Mud Shrimp, or Spectra Shrimp.

■ **Golden grey mullet:** If you locate a feeding shoal, you need to act quickly. They move very quickly to their next feeding area. Therefore, stay low, cast, cover and move when and where they move.

At times, it is recommended to wade carefully behind a shoal feeding close to the water's edge and cast back to the beach, then drag the flies back into the surf. This can be a much stealthier approach. Try a figure-of-eight or short pull retrieve. Alternatively, simply allow your flies to trundle in the surf and be ready to strip strike a bite.

Best patterns are an Apps bloodworm or Flexible Fiend (point fly), Tagged Romy's Sand Shrimp, or a Red Devil.



Thick-lipped caught on a Spectra Shrimp

TOP TIPS

- Do your homework on places to fish – find a location where mullet actively feed.
- Prepare to bite your tongue to avoid cursing – you will lose as many mullet as you land.
- I have still yet to catch a slam of each of these three species of mullet on the same day. It's not an unrealistic ambition if I get my revision sorted.



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Q&A

SHORE FISHING

ASK THE EXPERTS

WHEN SENDING YOUR QUESTION, PLEASE REMEMBER TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS



PAUL FENECH

Sea Angler's features and tackle editor Paul is here to solve your shore angling problems.



DAVE LEWIS

Based in Newport, South Wales, our contributing editor Dave answers boat fishing questions.



MARK CRAME

Suffolk-based Mark gets a thrill from fishing afloat on a kayak. Send him your kayaking queries.



HENRY GILBEY

Angler and photo-journalist Henry, based in Cornwall, will answer questions on lure angling.



DAN SISSONS

The Portsmouth angler will provide answers on the sport of light rock fishing (LRF), the go-anywhere tactic.

HOW TO ASK A QUESTION

■ Email: cliff.brown@kelsey.co.uk or online: www.facebook.com/seaanglermag

CODLING



DAB



AUTUMN



FLOUNDER



WHITING

Q: What time of year am I likely to catch each specific species of fish from the shore?

PADRAIG O'SULLIVAN, DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN

PF says: If I knew the answer to that question, I reckon I could become an extremely rich man. Seriously, though, shore fishing is certainly based around seasons, especially when it comes to targeting particular species of fish from the shore.

However, I can't be exactly specific with times, but I can offer you a general idea when the right time of year is to target and catch certain species that are likely to be around in any sort of numbers.

If I could start with autumn, this is the time that shore anglers begin to set their sights on whiting, flounders, dabs and the first arrivals of codling at our beaches.

Winter is definitely cod time. With the temperature significantly dropping, the first arrival of onshore gales signals to the serious cod angler to venture out. Spring tides leading up to Christmas is often

the time regarded by many to be the ideal opportunity to catch the larger cod. Flounders will also begin to feed heavily close to the shoreline too, in readiness before they head off into deeper water to spawn.

Springtime heralds the arrival of the first fish back inshore from an annual spawn. Fish, like plaice, thornback rays and bass, will be thin and hungry, and, coinciding with the first peeler crab moult, they will be keen to have a good feed.

Finally, summer has now become the favourite time for many shore anglers. Good weather combined with lots of species gathering, means sport should be enjoyable. Smoothhounds, rays, bass, tope, bream and all flatfish including soles will certainly be plentiful.

Of course, finding where the productive marks are is totally up to each individual angler, and working out what baits and tactics to catch them all comes with experience.

Fishing is one of the most unpredictable sports around and, as many of us know, it can certainly throw up a few surprises too. You should always expect the unexpected when shore fishing.

BASS



BREAM



SUMMER



SMOOTHHOUND



TOPE

In association with



Q: Now that Covid-19 lockdown and restrictions have been eased, I'm looking to purchase a new reel. Cash is tight and I'm hoping to buy something that will cover all of my shore, boat and kayak fishing. Will the Penn 525 Mag3 be good enough, or should I look to purchase a reel for each type of fishing I do?

ALAN WILLIAMS, BY EMAIL

PF says: The Penn Mag3 multiplier reel is, without doubt, a fantastic piece of kit, and it will make a great purchase for those types of fishing you mention.

However, in all honesty, if you were to use it for all of your fishing, it's bound to take its toll eventually and probably run out of steam.

The main thing to remember is a lot of our fishing requires different tactics, especially

the ground we fish over and the mainline we use.

Sometimes, if we need to cast further from the beach to reach the fish, a thinner diameter line is best, but if we're fishing over rough ground, the mainline may need to be increased to cope with the harsh terrain.

The same can be said of kayak and certain aspects of boat fishing. A thinner diameter line will cope with inshore yakking and boat fishing, especially if the tide run is quite strong. But it's possible that the ground or even structures below, may pose more of a problem and stronger line may be needed.

Unless you feel that changing mainlines on the reel for each individual setting is a viable option for you, then go for it, but in reality it's not going to be very cost effective, and the reel's gearing system will more than likely become overworked, or worse, eventually fail.

My advice would be to purchase a reel that will be up to the job in hand, with the correct mainline on the spool. You could even buy three Penn Mag3 multipliers, at least you'll know that it's filled with the correct mainline and not being overworked over all the disciplines you do.



Penn 525 Mag3 multiplier reel



Purchase a reel that will be up to the job in hand

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T&C's: * One prize per winning question will be chosen by the editor. Prizes cannot be exchanged and no correspondence will be looked into. We reserve the right to send alternative prizes.

Q: Are boom rigs still productive, or are they now outdated?

P THOMAS, WHITCHURCH, SHROPSHIRE

PF says: In my opinion, rigs never become outdated because they will all serve a purpose in most types of shore fishing.

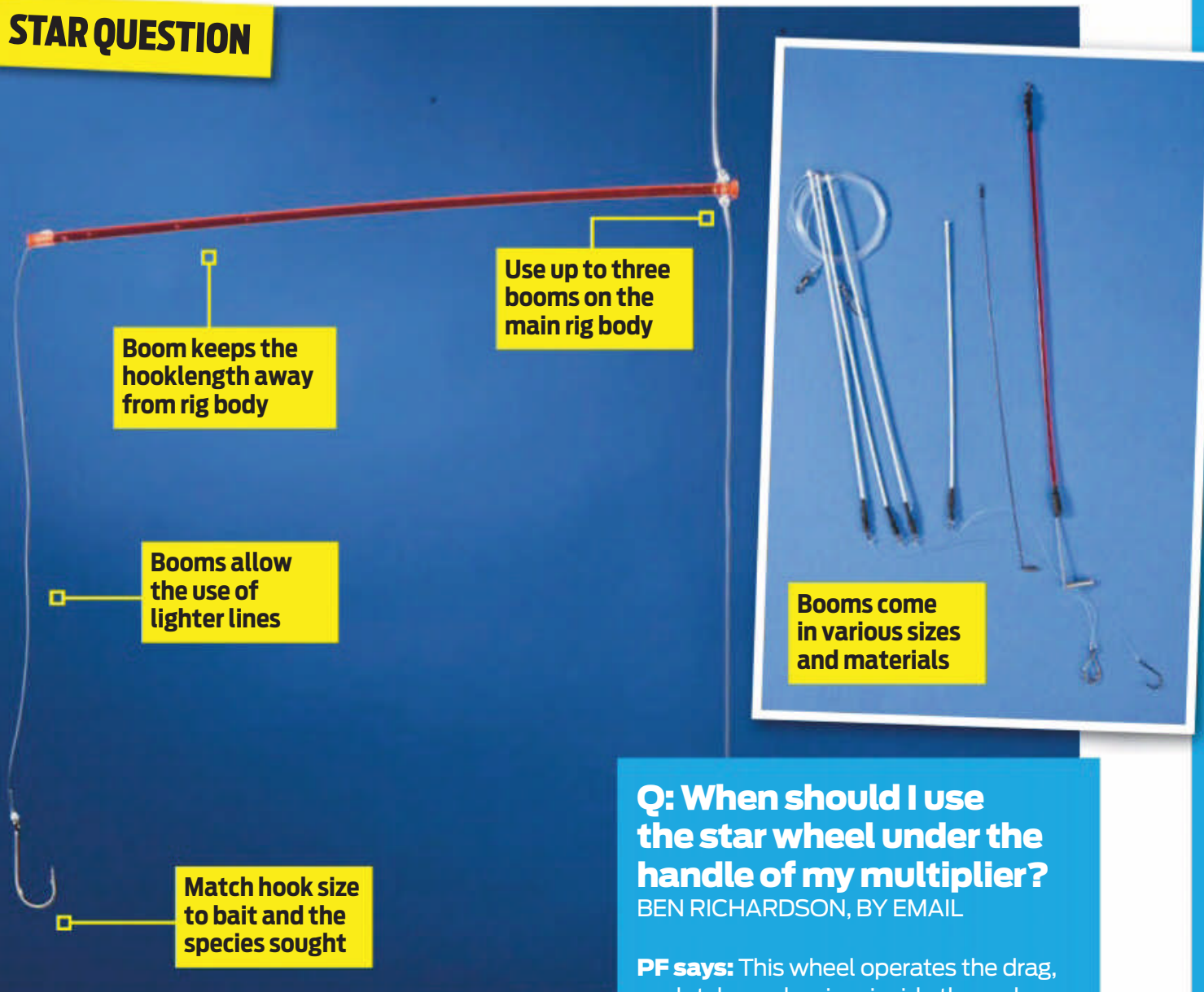
Rigs can be tweaked and constructed to help us cast and present baits better, and terminal components have improved vastly over the years.

Boom rigs are fantastic for allowing a hook snood to stand off from the main rig body, preventing annoying tangles. A boom will spin around the rig body too, which is ideal in a fast tide and deep water.

There are many different types of boom available, like the plastic boom or the wire versions available from Gemini. They all come in different sizes and lengths too.

Some booms are even equipped with bait clips, enabling a rig to become streamlined and thus helping us to cast further and protecting delicate baits.

STAR QUESTION



Q: When should I use the star wheel under the handle of my multiplier?

BEN RICHARDSON, BY EMAIL

PF says: This wheel operates the drag, or clutch mechanism inside the reel. Basically, when tightened, the spool will be in a fixed position, but as it's gradually loosened, the spool will be allowed to slip as the load becomes heavier.

Many shore anglers use it in conjunction with the clicker or ratchet system when in pursuit of larger specimens capable of charging off with a bait once they become hooked.

By loosening the drag system, a larger hooked fish is allowed to move off with the bait and hook in its mouth, preventing the rod and reel being dragged into the sea. When the line is pulled from the spool, the clicker or ratchet will sound, like an alarm, alerting the angler that the bait has been taken.

It's also used when playing a large fish. The wheel can be adjusted during the fight, to allow a fish to move off without any resistance and preventing the line from breaking under extreme stress.

Always make sure that the star wheel is fully locked before you make each cast. This prevents the spool from slipping as you load up a powerful cast.



Q: I have been making my own lead weights, but have recently decided to coat them with a luminous powder. The undercoat is always smooth, but the outer coating always appears and feels gritty. How will I achieve a more smooth, professional finish?

RONNIE ARCHIBALD, LIMAVADY, NORTHERN IRELAND



PF says: I've never quite understood why so many anglers are infatuated by coloured lead weights. I've even heard some match anglers discussing which colours are best and more productive.

For me, a lead weight does nothing more than carry your baited rig out to sea and then anchor it into position. Nevertheless, many hold a high opinion that coloured lead weights bring results.

To be honest, I wouldn't know where to start with coating a lead weight, but does it really matter whether or not a lead weight is smooth or gritty in texture, when ultimately it will be rolling around the seabed?

Perhaps ditch the gritty outer finish and use more layers of the smooth undercoat until you are happy with the coloured finish?

Q&A

LRF

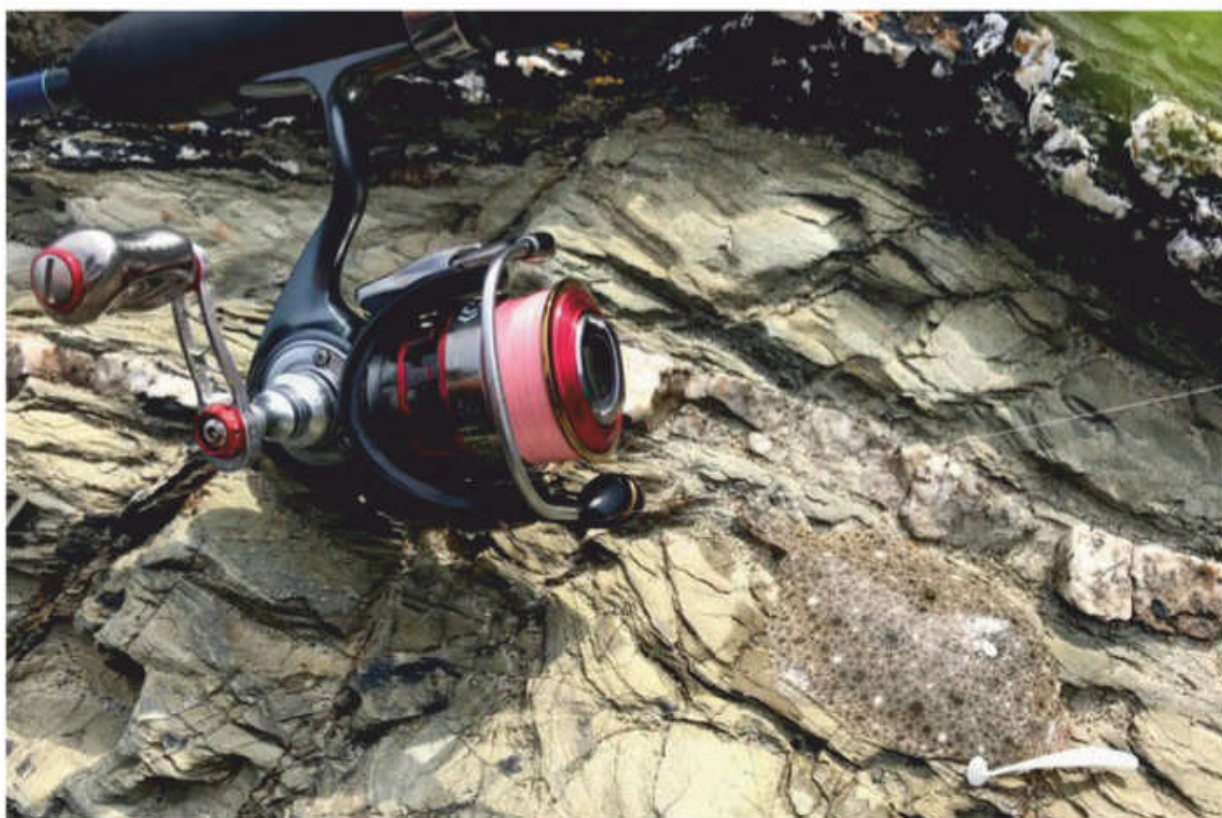
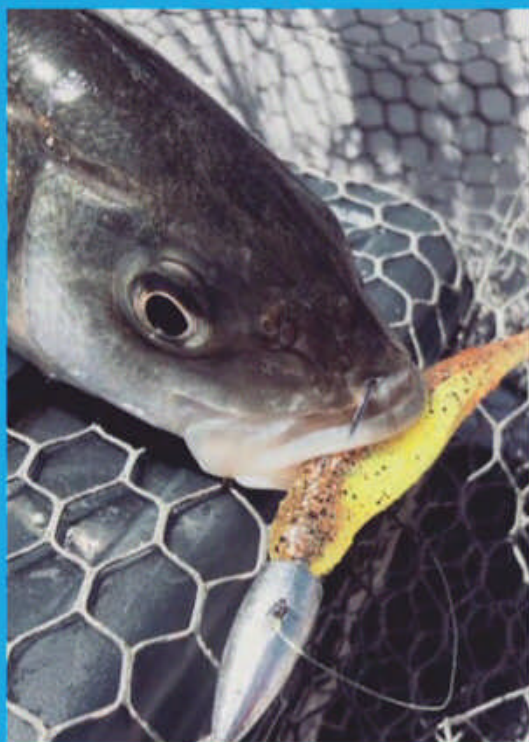
Q: What are the benefits of using a leader material, and why can't I tie my mainline directly to a lure or clip?

LEON SUTTON, MAIDSTONE, KENT

DS says: A fluorocarbon leader is essential. All lure fishing can involve putting your plastic into heavy weed, rocks or structures, and that couple of feet of abrasion-resistance can make the difference between a lost fish and one in the net.

Secondly, fluorocarbon is almost invisible underwater and this will increase your chances of hook-ups. Lastly, braid has zero stretch. Trust me when I say that some stretch in your line when you hit that fish of a lifetime can make the difference between a great photograph or just another story of one that got away.

I know that tying a leader knot on a windy day can be a nightmare, but I tie my FG knot at home with a 1m leader. This lasts me a session unless something really unexpected happens. When possible, use a line diameter smaller than your mainline because the knot will be easier to tie.



Q: I want to start LRF, but even though I'm on a tight budget I don't want to compromise my chances of catching. I have a telescopic rod and am looking for advice as to what budget gear is out there.

SCOTT WILSON, EASTBOURNE, E SUSSEX

DS says: There has never been so much quality lure fishing tackle available, especially for anyone on a budget.

First, you need to balance your lures and end tackle with the rod and reel you are planning to use. For light tackle you will not go far wrong with anything from HTO. This

range has been at the forefront of lure fishing in the UK for some time and will certainly have something to suit your budget.

Beginning with a reel, HTO has the Rockfish and Lure Game reels that are more than adequate. Start with a selection of dropshot weights to suit the casting rating of your rod and add to that a selection of small hooks. Jig heads and small metal jigs are a must.

The most important selection will be line choice. A decent quality braid of around 4lb-6lb or 0.4PE will make a huge difference to the overall feeling of your fishing.

For lures, get some flavoured worms, such as Marukyu, Isome or Berkely Gulp! for guaranteed bites. HTO Knight worms are a good all-rounder for light lure fishing, while the Z-Man Slim SwimZ will not be destroyed by small fish and will catch pollack, bass and much more.



Q&A

LURE ANGLING

Q: What are the features that I should look for in a fixed-spool reel for lure fishing around the British coast and how are those features best quantified?

MURDOCH M. MANN,
WAKEFIELD, WEST YORKS

STAR QUESTION

HG says: These days, spinning reels and how much we can get for our money is quite remarkable compared to only a few years ago. For more than a year, I have been fishing with a £150 spinning reel that is so light and smooth and incredible, that already I reckon it's better than a £300-plus reel I have from only three years ago.

What you need to do is think about how you are going about your lure fishing and what you need from a spinning reel.

I am going to concentrate on the Shimano and Penn brands because I know their reels the best, but there are plenty of other brands out there.

On a 9ft or 9ft 6in lure rod rated around the 7-35g mark, I am looking to a 3000 or 4000

size Shimano spinning reel (a Shimano 2500 is the same size as a 3000 by the way). It is really a case of what feels the best to you, balance-wise. By no means do you need to spend a fortune, but around £150 buys you a Shimano Stradic FL reel, and they are truly amazing to use.

I far prefer a front drag on a spinning reel because I believe they are much smoother and more reliable than a rear-drag, and I will always go for a single handle rather than a twin design. I haven't come across a Shimano or indeed a Daiwa spinning reel over the last few years that hasn't had a perfect line-lay when taken out of the box, and I have no worries about filling any of their reels right up with braid for a wind knot free life.



If you are lure fishing, where your spinning reel is going to get drenched with saltwater on a regular basis – surf or kayak fishing for example – then I believe you need to look instead at a slightly heavier but better protected Penn Slammer III in the 3500 or 4500 size (same body, slightly bigger spool on the 4500). The saltwater abuse that these spinning reels can take is incredible.

Make sure to underfill them a bit, otherwise you can get a few wind knots. For sure they are heavier and not quite as smooth as most of the Shimano or Daiwa reels, but the simple fact is that the Slammers can take a lot more saltwater grief and keep on going. I have fished a Slammer III 3500 on 9ft lure rods, but prefer how they feel on 9ft 6in and longer rods. It's my go-to spinning reel for surf fishing.

The slightly cheaper Penn Spinfisher VI range is also very good and can live with a good saltwater drenching, and, if it helps, a 3500-size Penn is essentially the same size as a 4000 size Shimano. We have never had it so good when it comes to spinning reels for our lure fishing.



Q: What lure would you recommend for targeting bass, but not mackerel, when mackerel are hammering the baitfish?

SAM FULLER, HONITON, DEVON

HG says: This is a great question exactly because it has happened to me on a few occasions. The bass are around but I couldn't get through the mackerel, and on



a few evenings I have made the decision to stop fishing because it wasn't right to keep catching mackerel and trying to safely return them once I had taken a few for my family.

Although bigger mackerel will quite happily hit paddletails and other soft plastics, the chances of hooking up with them is greatly reduced, so it's worth trying them for starters. It can be frustrating to get hit after hit from mackerel, but if they can't get hooked then any bass are in with a chance of connecting with my lure.

Metals are out because mackerel love them, and, at time, even surface lures can't prevent the mackerel from grabbing them..

There is, of course, the argument for putting on a much bigger lure that the mackerel might not be interested in, such as one that perhaps imitates a mackerel.

For the most part I don't carry lures of that size. As we all know, mackerel hitting bait is not exactly predictable, and when bigger mackerel are really on it, they will hit virtually anything.

Q: Should I use a shockleader when lure fishing?

MICHAEL LUNNISS, LONDON

HG says: If we are talking about UK and Irish lure fishing from the shore then I don't think we do. I have tried different ways of doing things, but haven't come across a situation where I am casting a lure heavier than, say, 50g for my own bass fishing.

For 99 per cent of the time my spinning reel is loaded up with a 20lb braid tied to a short fluorocarbon leader, and I can't recall an occasion when casting as hard as I can with any of my lures has resulted in a mainline breakage.

For a while I did try lure fishing with a stronger braid leader and then that short bit of fluorocarbon on the end.

While this went through the rod rings just fine, it means another knot in my set-up, and I couldn't find any advantages.



A good 20lb or so braid simply isn't going to snap when casting the sort of lures we use. I deliberately use a short leader so that the FG knot connecting braid to leader sits outside of the rod rings when I cast.

In no way is this leader acting as a shockleader. Instead, I want this leader to act as a bit of protection against abrasion, but that is all it is at the end of the day.



Q&A

BOAT ANGLING

Q: What is the best rig to fish jellyworms, artificial sandeels or shads over either a wreck or a reef?

EVAN MORGAN, SWANSEA

The trace line should be around 8-12ft of good-quality clear monofilament between 20-30lb breaking strain

Hook size depends on the size of lure. In all cases, it must be needle-sharp and very strong

It is best to use either a bomb or ball-shaped weight that falls smoothly down through the water column

DL says: Almost always the most efficient rig to fish the type of lures you mention is a basic running leger. It's an easy rig to tie.

If you are using braid, start by sliding a long plastic tube boom on to the monofilament leader. If using mono, slide directly on to the mainline. Traditionally, many anglers used a fixed, wire French boom for this style of fishing, and these are still very effective.

The chosen boom should be as long as possible, which will reduce tangles to an absolute minimum by keeping the lure well clear of the mainline while dropping down through the water column.

Next, slide a small bead on the leader to act as a buffer against the knot, and

then tie a very small swivel at the end. Unnecessarily large swivels will have a negative impact on presentation, and cheap swivels are next to useless and often fail when hooked up with a good fish.

The trace line should be around 8-12ft of good-quality clear monofilament between 20-30lb breaking strain.

For this style of fishing, lead shape is critical. It is best to use either a bomb or ball-shaped weight that falls smoothly down through the water column, helping to minimise the risk of tangles. Flat-bottomed leads tend to tumble and roll, causing problems. The weight of lead will be dependent on water depth and the speed

of drift; 8-12oz is about right for most UK wrecking situations I have encountered.

Hook size depends on the size of lure. In all cases, it must be needle-sharp and very strong. I favour the Sakuma Manta range, which are perfect for this style of fishing. Most shads come ready rigged with a hook.



The chosen boom should be as long as possible to reduce tangles



Slide a small bead on the leader to act as a buffer against the knot



STAR QUESTION

Q: Do you have any advice on handling a boat in close quarters situations, such as when coming alongside a berth in a busy marina?

DANIEL JOHNSON, IPSWICH, SUFFOLK



DL says: When approaching or manoeuvring into a tight or awkward situation, you can, if necessary, always make a boat go ahead a little faster by engaging forward gear for a few seconds. But if you approach a situation too quickly, having to select reverse and increase the revs in an attempt to slow down and stop will invariably make things far more difficult.

Try this simple demonstration for yourself. Find a quiet patch of open water, engage forward gear and increase the revs until the boat is moving at around four to six knots (fast walking pace), then put the boat into neutral and note what happens. Typically, you will see that it will take in the region of 20-30 seconds to come to a complete stop.

Next, try exactly the same manoeuvre

again, but this time, as the boat moves forward turn the steering wheel and you will find that the boat responds crisply to the helm. This illustrates that the engine does not always need to be in gear to maintain steerage, as an outboard engine is not only a propulsion unit but a rudder, too.

Whenever performing close-quarters manoeuvres, it is best to have the outboard trimmed fully down to ensure maximum steerage, but, of course, when operating in shallow water, the engine will need to be trimmed up to prevent damaging the prop.

Spend some time practising coming alongside or berthing at an open pontoon or harbour wall. Always start from a position in safe open water, while keeping watch for other boats entering or leaving the area.

The key when performing such

manoeuvres is to go slowly while continually gauging how the wind and any tide affect the movement of the boat. Try to plan your approach so that you are heading into the current or wind, whichever is strongest, so you can coordinate your final approach slowly and in control, simply by kicking the engine into and out of gear. When this is not possible, you will need to gauge the effect of these variables, and compensate for them as early as possible.

The golden rule when practicing any tight manoeuvre on a boat is that if you start to think things are going wrong, then invariably they are. Therefore, rather than keep heading into a situation that obviously is going badly wrong, it is far better to abort the manoeuvre early, return to safe open water, and start again. ■



Whenever performing close-quarters manoeuvres, it is best to have the outboard trimmed fully down to ensure maximum steerage

Q&A

KAYAK



Q: While it is easy enough to climb into a kayak in a harbour or from a pontoon, can you explain the process for launching and retrieving a kayak on an open beach?

KEVIN NEWMAN, DEAL, KENT

MC says: In my view it is easier from the water because you don't get 'the wobble'. There is, of course, more to it than just getting in and paddling off.

Assume that this is not a flat calm day. To begin with, you want to ensure that everything is stowed away where you need it – in reach when on the water, out of the way while paddling and lashed down when required. The vast majority of capsizes happen at launch and landing, so it's a sensible precaution.

It's usually fine to launch with your rods upright in holders behind you, but if you do have a rough-looking launch and think there is a possibility of being rolled, then lay them flat and strap them down (or put them

inside the hull if possible). Most people have snapped a rod or two kayak fishing, and pivoting on one can tear out a rod holder – which is you off the water for the day!

Now look at the water and watch the waves. Spend a few minutes looking to see if there are sets of larger waves. If so, you want to wait until the last of the large ones rolls through, then go as it flattens off before the next large set arrives.

You may have a pattern of four large waves followed by four small ones and a gap of 30 seconds to get out more easily. Take that! Have a look to see if you have some shelter, from a groyne perhaps, and a rip current that can help to get you out quicker.

When you are ready to launch, ensure that you have a clear and easy entry straight into your seat. Take hold of the front toggle in your left hand, paddle in your right and pull the kayak behind you (so it doesn't swing and knock you over) into knee-deep water ideally – deeper than that slows down your entry. As your moment comes, pull the kayak forwards past you, roll into it in position and paddle out immediately. This should take you a



second – if you faff around you will lose your advantage. Now just paddle hard and don't stop until you are out past the breakers.

LANDING

Coming back in, you need to stow stuff away. There are times when I will put everything into the front hatch because of the likelihood of getting rolled. Undo your paddle leash, because if you go over you don't want to be attached to a tangle hazard or be pulling a heavy lump of kayak on to your head.

With everything ready, paddle in behind the breakers and watch again for the sets. Go in after the last of the large ones and keep yourself straight for as long as you can.

If you feel the kayak swinging, lean and rudder out to the side and rear with your paddle if you can. If you are swinging into a wave that is about to break, then it's time to lean into the wave and brace with your paddle on top of it and 'bongo slide' in sideways. Be firm and confident.

Once you make it to shore, jump out of the kayak and drag it away from the sea before it gets lifted by incoming water.

It's all a lot easier than it seems when written down. I'd always suggest a few practices with an empty kayak after a session too, just to get more experience.



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Take advantage of this incredible shore or boat deal...



LET'S FACE IT, who doesn't love a summer spinning session targeting mackerel, bass or even garfish? Early morning or late evening sorties can bring some fantastic results, and if you match the style of fishing with the correct kit, the fun can be memorable.

This full set-up will certainly help you to put all that action into practice, while putting a decent wedge of cash back into your pocket.

First up is the Shakespeare Omni mackerel rod, and at 10ft and rated at 4-8oz, it's perfect for throwing a set of feathers or spinners, or even plopping a float out into gullies and bays.

Coupled with the rod is the Vigor Power fixed-spool reel. It has a graphite body, balanced rotor and arrives pre-loaded with 15lb mainline.

If that wasn't enough to whet your appetite, also included is a rig wallet stuffed with 10 sets of various feather

rigs and two, four-piece Dexter Wedge lure sets weighing 40g and 20g.

Normally, this full kit would set you back £93.95 in the shops, but it could be yours today for just £49.99 – putting a cool £44 back into your pocket in a deal you cannot afford to miss!

Ordering couldn't be easier – we've created three easy ways (below). Give the helpful staff at the Fishing Megastore a call, place your order and leave the rest to them.

The rod comes with a Vigor Power reel



Two Dexter Wedge sets are included in the deal



A rig wallet houses 10 sets of feathers



THREE EASY WAYS TO ORDER

1. LOG ON to the link gac.fishing/00169SA

2. CALL 0141 212 8880 and quote 00169SA

3. BY POST Glasgow Angling Centre, Unit 1, 29 Saracen St, Glasgow G22 5HT and quote 00169SA

*Please make cheques payable to 'Glasgow Angling Ltd'

(*FREE P&P)

RELY ON
SEA ANGLER
TO BRING YOU
GREAT TACKLE DEALS
EVERY ISSUE

FIRST LOOK

Paul Fenech samples the latest gear to hit the tackle shops



SHIMANO POWER AERO SURF 450 XTR-C ROD RRP: £314.99

A powerful three-piece carbon outfit designed with nano alloy technology. At 4.50 metres, it's fitted with genuine Fuji KWAG rings throughout and a Fuji NS7 snap-lock reel seat. Rated to cast up to 225g, it features double reinforced female joints for added strength, along with Shimano balance weights to suit your own needs.

■ For your nearest Shimano stockist, tel: 0330 333 4888. Web: www.fish.shimano-eu.com



FISHEAGLE LARGE COOL BAIT BAG

PRICE: £11.99

Brilliant for keeping your baits fresh throughout a session. Incorporates three separate compartments for storing different baits, and has a large mesh pocket at the front.

■ Available from Glasgow Angling Centre, tel: 0141 2128880. Web: www.fishingmegastore.com



TECH SPEC

- Shielded stainless steel bearings
- XT-7 frame
- Machined aluminium handle
- Zinc diecast gear
- Maintenance port
- Hypergear
- Floating shaft II
- Weighs 650g
- 400m of 0.40mm spool capacity
- 3+1 bearings

SHIMANO SPEEDCAST XS-B 14000 FIXED-SPOOL REEL RRP: £124.99

This is an outstanding example of a fixed-spool reel. Featuring X-Ship for efficient winding performance and a powerful 4.3:1 gear ratio that pulls in 103cm of line with every turn of the handle.

The cold-forged aluminium AR-C spool offers you superior casting control, and

together with a slow oscillation, line lay is incredibly good.

Other features include an instant drag, and it comes supplied with a line reducer.

■ For more info or to locate your nearest Shimano stockist, tel: 0330 333 4888. Web: www.fish.shimano-eu.com

DEEPER PRO+ SMART SONAR

RRP: £189

The ability to read and see what the seabed looks like can be a huge advantage to an angler, and now, with the aid of this sphere-like device and a smart phone or tablet, you can with the Deeper Pro+ Smart Sonar device.

Weighing just 3.5oz, it can be easily attached to a strong mainline and then cast to a desired spot. Immediately, it will start to scan, and information is beamed back live to your smartphone or tablet. It all happens by creating its own Wi-Fi signal to make a connection, regardless of your phone's signal and provider.

■ For more info visit: www.deepersonar.com





CAMPINGAZ POWERBOX PLUS COOLER

RRP: £89.99

Summer fishing can play havoc with keeping your bait nice and fresh, but this item certainly sorts that conundrum out perfectly.

Ideal for both boat and shore anglers alike, this 28-litre cooler operates off a 12v car plug-in, or a 230v electrical outlet (both attachments are included), and you can rely on it to keep everything you store inside super-cool.

Combined with a high-performance, injected PU foam, it will keep the contents at a steady 18 degrees

below the ambient temperature.

A control dial with four modes allows you to choose a desired performance and efficiency level. You can even turn the cooler off without removing the cord.

To reduce noise levels, simply switch the cooler into night mode, and for an environmentally-friendly operation, turn it to eco mode. If you need to reduce the cooling temperature for a rapid cooling, switch it to max.

■ For more info, visit: www.campingaz.com



PENN SURFBLASTER II 8000 FIXED-SPOOL REEL

RRP: £109.99

Featuring a graphite frame and sideplates, the aluminium spool is equipped with line capacity rings to help you load your mainline perfectly.

The slow oscillation ensures you have a perfect line-lay every time, while six bearings keep everything silky-smooth.

Designed to be used with either braid or mono, it's perfect for anglers who prefer to fish shore venues that are clean-to-mixed and it's fully saltwater resistant.

■ For your nearest Penn dealer, tel: 01665 602771.

Web: www.penn-fishing.co.uk



SAVAGE GEAR MICRO SANDEEL KIT

RRP: £4.49

These LRF kits combine paddletail sandeels that have a super vibrating and darting action.

They come supplied with their own jig heads and are available in five different colours.

■ For your nearest Savage Gear stockist, tel: 01827 59659. Web: www.savage-gear.com

SHAKESPEARE AGILITY 2 8000LC FIXED-SPOOL REEL

RRP: £89.99

This quality shore fixed-spool reel features a new aluminium long-cast spool design. A full graphite body keeps the weight to a minimum, while the slow oscillation ensures you have a perfect line-lay always.

Other noticeable features include anti-twist line roller, large bale-arm, soft grip on the large handle, seven ball-bearings, 4.3:1 retrieve and a huge spool capacity of 375m of 0.40mm.

■ To locate your nearest Shakespeare stockist, tel: 01665 602771.

Web: www.shakespeare-fishing.co.uk



**THE KIT YOU
NEED FOR...**



Targeting estuary flounders

Late summer offers the chance to target flounders from shallow estuaries. We highlight the correct kit you'll need to be successful...



ROD & REEL

There's no need for powerful rods and reels as flounders are often found feeding extremely close to the edge. A set-up such as the Tronixpro Oceanik three-piece rod and Oceanik fixed-spool reel is ideal.

The rod is lightweight and extremely easy to handle with a delicate tip that is perfect for spotting bites. The Oceanik fixed-spool reel is an 8000 size, equipped with six bearings and a slow oscillation. ROD RRP: £54.99 REEL RRP: £65.99



THE SHALLOW, MUDDY BANKS and harbour walls of an estuary are perfect habitats for targeting flounders. They love to burry themselves in the soft mud, waiting to ambush their next meal that happens to come past them in the tide.

Using relatively light and delicate tackle, this humble flatfish offers terrific sport, while the tactics and kit used to catch them is incredibly simple and by no means complicated.

During the summer, peeler crabs are

undoubtedly the top bait to use as the estuaries are generally full of them, shedding their shells on the bankside. But by adding a small bunch of harbour ragworms, or a sliver of fish like mackerel too, your chances of success will be rapidly increased.

One neat trick for trapping a feeding flounder is to keep your baited rig continually on the move. Flounders are true predators and absolutely love a chase.

Lightweight sinkers that can move along the seabed in the tide, will generally bring you a bite extremely quickly.

RIG AND HOOKS

Without doubt, the best rig to use when targeting flounders is a one-up, one down. Extremely easy to construct and tie yourself, use Kamasan B940M size 2 hooks. Made from high carbon steel fine wire, they are extremely sharp, with a chemically-sharpened point. RRP: £2.70 per pack

Clip on your leader fits on the rig swivel

Size 2 hook

Size 2 hook

Crimps and beads hold swivel in place

Use a grip lead or plain weight, depending on conditions



LEAD WEIGHTS

When fishing in a tidal estuary, the run can sometimes be fierce, and a breakout-style weight will be needed to anchor your rig in position. When the tide eases, though, switch to a small, plain lead weight and allow your rig to move slowly. A moving bait will definitely attract the attention of a hungry flounder.

BAIT

The best baits for targeting flounders in an estuary are peeler crabs and harbour rag (maddies). By tipping off with a piece of fish like mackerel, the extra scent will certainly be attractive.



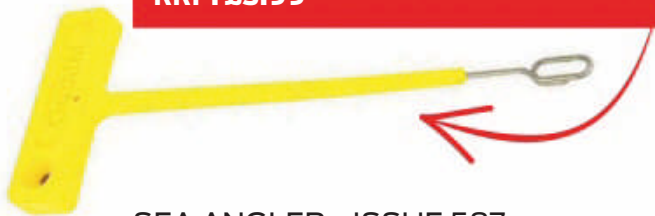
BAIT ELASTIC

When using soft peeler crab baits, you can keep it secured to the hook by using bait elastic. Don't use the type used in knitting as this is too heavy and thick and will mask your bait on the hook. Instead, opt for the very fine elastic, like the Sakuma Light Bait Elastic. RRP: £1.94



DISGORGER

It's always a good idea to have a disgorger close by when fishing for flounders. These flatfish are renowned for gulping down baits, and the Gemini disgorger is ideal for removing deep-set hooks. RRP: £5.99



TRIPOD

The Ian Golds Super Match tripod is perfect for fishing with two rods. It's incredibly stable with cups to sit your rods into. It can even be adjusted to sit low or high above the water, depending on the conditions. It folds together to fit neatly into your rod holdall. RRP: Around £40.



BUCKET

When catching flounders, try not to let them flap around on the ground. Instead, place them into a bucket of water, while you cast out your next rig. This gives them a little time to revive before being returned. One of the best is the Tronixpro Bucket. It's large, and even has a large tray that slots neatly inside for storing extra tackle or bait. RRP: £27.99 ■



Take the tube

Belly boats have come a long way since their introduction on trout waters, and the new Slider from Hart opens up opportunities for expanding your light rock fishing



ABOVE: Cod taken on a Hart Barri jig

HART SLIDER

RRP: £739.99

FISHING IN SEA LOCHS CAN ALWAYS be a bit of an adventure into the unknown because the varied fishing always offers the possibility of catching some unusual species.

Mostly, my sea loch fishing is from the shore and involves walking and exploring my way around. However, on this occasion I was trying out The Slider, a new hybrid float tube from Hart.

Belly boats, as they are often known, have come a long way, and their use in fly-fishing and freshwater lure fishing are common, but less so in the sea, and for good reason too. They are generally aimed at calm inshore waters and not for traversing large areas. For that you need a boat or a kayak or a highly specialised float tube.

Not all sea lochs are suitable for float tubing, but I look for shallow, sloping beaches or shingle shores where it is easy to land and launch. I also want settled and calm water. Float tubing in the sea lochs is a great way of searching an area where you would normally be casting. It is rare I stray beyond casting range, partly for safety and partly because the majority of the fish I seek are all within 50 metres of the shore.

Safety is paramount, so besides from a personal flotation device (PFD), waterproof phone cases and a buddy system, it is also important to go only as far as you are prepared to carry your tube. This way, if conditions change or tide becomes too much, you can quickly land and relocate by foot.

Float tubing lends itself to travelling with minimal kit, just like standard light rock fishing (LRF). While the Slider is probably too big to carry fully assembled, many standard belly boats are easily carried on your back like a rucksack. Certainly, this is a good policy to help you get a feel of conditions and tide.

Sea lochs have a tidal current, some considerably stronger than others, so you really need to have a bit of knowledge of the area before you choose a likely spot. However, they are much like any large inshore body of water and, for those experienced in float tubing, fairly straightforward on a calm day.

Now many sea lochs contain small inlets and bays off the main body of the loch, and these are perfect for exploring with the float tube and LRF gear. Working the margins along the weed fringe and open water can be incredibly good fun and extremely productive. This is a great ploy for targeting scorpion fish and wrasse.

A dropshot rig lured this short spined scorpion



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

On my most recent visit, the float tube was quickly inflated, checked and launched. The Slider has oars and is a hybrid-style craft with elements of a paddleboard, belly boat and pontoon boat. You sit quite high on the inflatable seat, with your lower legs in the water to paddle with flippers. It is also designed for an angler to stand on and cast. I wouldn't be using it for that.

My first impressions of the craft were that it offered a bigger footprint than the average float tube and, due to its flat style, provided lots of stable places to place tackle when fishing. It was easy to manoeuvre with fins and oars, and it offered a safe, stable fishing platform. It also allowed me to comfortably mount my portable Lowrance fish-finder to it. This was used more to gauge depth than to find fish, but it was certainly fascinating judging depths of drop-offs I had fished from the shore.

Finding drop-offs and changes in depth can quickly find you a likely fish-holding area. It is pretty easy to feel around with, say, a weedless dropshot rig to work out the makeup of the seabed. Well, that is if you cannot see it. Many sea lochs have superb visibility, allowing you to see quite far down, and this goes hand in hand with working close to the shore in a float tube.

Float tubing along the sloping shores (not cliffs) of the loch can put you in a great position to feel the lure running down the slope into deeper water.

By casting and working a drop shot lure around, it soon gives you a great idea of depth and bottom composition.

FISHING METHODS

The two main methods are dropshot with a weedless rig and metal jigs. Jig-head rigged plastics are good, but often, depending on wind and drift, it is easier to get a metal down deep to work the bottom area. These areas in deep water often yield codling.

A weedless dropshot rig is just a standard version using an offset hook. When float tubing using my LRF gear, I fish a 10g dropshot lead weight and then various soft plastics, from Gulp Sandworm to small shads rigged weedless on the hook.

In many of the sea lochs I fish the shore slopes down into deep water, where there is generally a weed fringe along the shore. The area where this weed fringe ends and the bottom of the slope or drop-off is the hotspot for fish, and most are within casting distance from the shore.

A stable
platform for
all your gear



Where the float tube gives a massive advantage is that it lets you get directly above the features, meaning you can fish vertically. It gives you a much better chance to land the fish and not lose gear. Generally, when fishing the sea lochs from the shore, the main difficulty is in landing fish such as pollack, cod and wrasse. As you bring them towards you they can dive into the rocks and kelp between the shore and the deeper water. Purely by being above the fish, even above heavy kelp cover, the fish can be played easily in an up and down fight.

I was able to be 10 to 15 metres from the shore and be in 20 metres of water with a couple of kicks from the flippers. It was very easy to work the seabed under the craft, just by keeping the lead weight in contact with the bottom and working the lure against it quickly generate bites, mostly from poor cod. The occasional scorpion fish came along to liven things up. The joy of fishing so close to shore in relatively deep water is that there are always a few big short-spined scorpion fish present, and they are a very impressive fish when caught on LRF gear.

DEEP WATER

By working along the calm shoreline I soon found areas where the drop-off was steeper, and this gave us more access to deep water. It was gently sloping from the shore and easy to land anywhere, which is always an important thing to bear in mind when choosing where to work the tube.

In order to effectively fish the deep water, I tried HRF gear and metal slow jigs with assist hooks. Again, this was all within casting distance of the shore, but with that crucial

vertical presentation and hang time in the deeper water.

Using mostly the 40g Hart Barri and Palito slow jigs in a couple of colours, they produced fish so consistently and escaped from many snags due to the assists. Almost from the first drop into the deeper water I got thudded by a codling as the lure touched the seabed, which was followed by a strong head-nodding and lunging fight on the HRF gear. Most certainly worth waiting for!

The jigs were super effective when gently jigged a couple of feet from the bottom so that I could feel the lure touch the seabed before lifting the rod tip. Being rigged with assists, the jigs hardly snagged at all, yet hooked codling after codling.

Float tubing in the new Hart Slider, which costs around £739 (we've seen it for less than £700), certainly added another dimension to the ability to safely fish these inshore sea lochs. The traditional belly boat is maybe a little less versatile, but still effective for this style of close-range light-tackle fun. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

THE SLIDER FEATURES:

- 1000 denier PVC
- Reinforced top and bottom
- Rigid polyester mesh interior
- High pressure seat
- Large capacity pockets
- Aluminium reinforcement bar & oars
- Rear support for electric motor
- Keels for improved stability
- Maximum 15 Psi (1.03 bar) inflation
- Maximum load of 200kg

Main: Float tubing in sea lochs is a great way of searching an area where you would normally be casting

Left: It is easier to get a metal jig down deep to work the bottom area



BOAT STORE

A guide to new products for anglers going afloat

NEW DRIVE-BY-WIRE TECHNOLOGY OUTBOARDS

Leading outboard maker Suzuki has unveiled two new DF115BG and DF140BG four-stroke outboards, the first in their class to offer the advantages of drive-by-wire tech.

By bringing its proven drive-by-wire technology (known as Suzuki Precision Control) to its new 115hp and 140hp in-line four-cylinder models, Suzuki is helping to simplify the rigging process, plus delivering smooth shifting, instant throttle response, enhanced performance and fuel efficiency.

The reliability and precise control of drive-by-wire technology has been proven for years on the company's larger models, but the enhancements to the DF115BG and DF140BG go beyond the integration of drive-by-wire technology.

An upgraded compression ratio of 10.6:1 helps these new 2.0 litre displacement outboards achieve better top speed and acceleration by improving thermal efficiency. Fuel efficiency has also been increased compared to its existing DF115A and DF140A models. Factory testing has demonstrated as much as five to seven per cent better fuel efficiency for the

DF140BG across mid-range to high-end cruising speeds. The new DF115BG has demonstrated up to five to six per cent better fuel efficiency at cruising speed.

Other improvements include a 40 Amp alternator on both models that delivers improved output and battery charging performance at low idle speeds — ideal for craft with lots of electronics such as power-hungry angling boats.

They both feature a sporty, streamlined exterior design. With 508mm (L) and 635 (X) shaft lengths available, the new DF115BG and DF140BG outboards are an ideal power choice for a wide range of boats. Both outboards are available in Pearl Nebular Black colour. The redesigned cowling isn't just for great looks either because it also incorporates a new air intake structure with improved water separation and a silencer.

To make routine maintenance easier, Suzuki has made it possible to replace the oil filter simply by removing the upper engine cover. A new oil spill catcher surrounding the filter mount allows for changing the filter without making a mess.



Suzuki has also added an easy access water detection fuel filter.

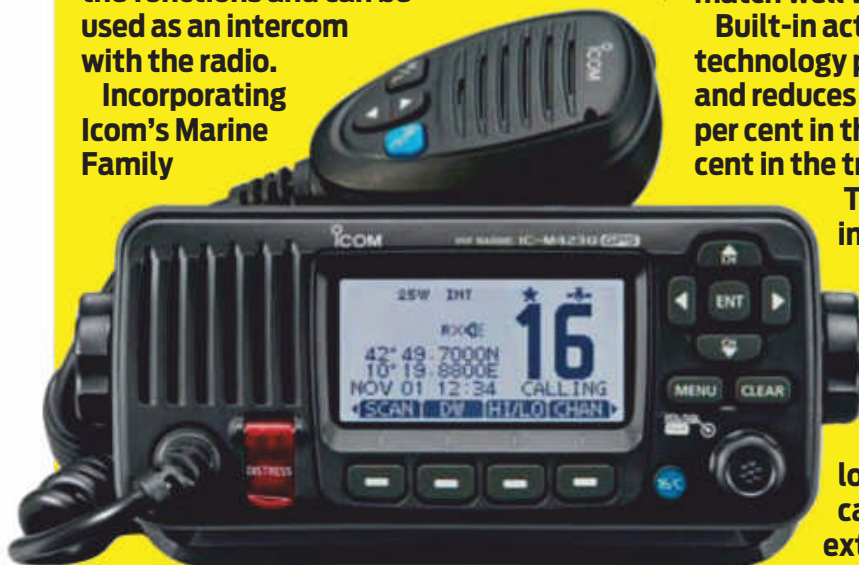
The DF115BG and DF140BG will be available from the end of the year.

■ Visit: www.marine.suzuki.co.uk

ICOM IC-M423GE MARINE RADIO

This new VHF radio is ideal for boat owners looking for a compact radio with advanced functions and dual station control. It features built-in active noise cancelling technology that provides superb audio performance. An optional Commandmic allows you to control all the functions and can be used as an intercom with the radio.

Incorporating Icom's Marine Family



User Interface, the IC-M423GE, which has a suggested retail price of £329.99, has been designed for simple, intuitive operation. A rotary selector and directional keypad provide quick and easy access to the functions. The high-contrast white backlit LCD and laser-cut keypad match well with modern boat designs.

Built-in active noise cancelling technology provides superb performance and reduces background noise up to 90 per cent in the received signal and 30 per cent in the transmit signal.

The IC-M423GE has a built-in 10 Watt amplifier that increases the audio output to an external PA speaker. The public address function allows you to make an announcement from the microphone, just like a loudspeaker. The foghorn can also be emitted from the external PA speaker.

The built-in DSC watch function monitors Channel 70 activity (Digital Selective Calling), even while you are receiving another channel. DSC functions include distress, individual, group, all ships, urgency, safety, position request/report, polling request and DSC test calls.

The optional white backlit Commandmic allows you to use the IC-M423GE from a separate cabin or tower.

■ For more info, visit: www.icomuk.co.uk

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

- Comes with HM-205B/SW remote-control speaker-microphone
- NMEA 0183 connectivity
- AquaQuake draining function
- IPX7 waterproof protection
- Dual/tri-watch function
- Priority and normal scan
- Black and super white versions available
- Supports four-digit channels
- Meets ITU-R M493-14 specifications

Tempted by a custom rod?

Matching horses for courses is where bespoke gear comes into its own, but you have to choose wisely





Cleanly around the corner and ready for the final hit. The correct rod action is critical with the older styles of pendulum casting



So many rods, so many choices. Which is right for you?

SERIOUS ANGLERS ARE KEEN TO own a custom rod but wary about which to choose. Playing with rods ranging from shortish and easy-going to long and beefy may have given you a fair idea of the options, but the unnerving thing is that the rods that seem to work best may not be the ones we originally had in mind.

For example, to your surprise and perhaps to your disappointment as well, you get on much better with a modestly stiff rod and a wide pendulum swing, whereas your dream was to master the latest tournament-grade weapons the casting experts recommend.

Imagine that your fishing mate sees things differently, which is no surprise given that he's built like an ox while you're Mr Average. Thinking that he would snap anything less, he went straight for a 14ft rough ground pole that delivers a vicious bite if its keeper lacks the expertise to tame it. Being a beginner, he tried to copy your style – a sad battle he was never going to win. Despite the size and strength of him, he simply could not make the damned thing work.

His inclination was to accept defeat and change to a sloppy rod, but by good luck he tagged along when you went for a couple of casting lessons. He looked, listened, and, like you, he conquered. The coach started him with ground casting, later switching to a compact, flat pendulum swing. After a bit of practice, his prospects were transformed. He's now wringing his rod's neck so hard that he needs to upgrade.

BUILD ON NATURE

Mere mortals of average size and strength usually do better with body rotation bolstering their casting power. Opting for pendulum style rather than an off-grounder, or a Euro outfit driven by a simple thump, we're ideal candidates for the classic or high-swing technique which uses a long power arc with lots of body turn. The fashionistas say we're stuck in the Stone Age, but we do very well, and what's more we love it.

Rotary power has much in common with discus throwing. A relatively short rod around 13ft long with progressive mid-zone and fairly stiff butt brings out the best in most people, delivering power and finesse in equal measure for casting and fishing.

Big lads generally do better with today's flat pendulum styles, which are more related to the shot-putting or weightlifting concept of sudden power over a fairly short path. Today's casters tend to be very strong in the arms and shoulders, but most are not particularly flexible in the body – just like your burly mate. Nature evolved him to be perfect for a comparatively explosive style that excels with a long, stiff rod. It is rare to find a caster who is massively built yet can use lots of body action, and has immaculate technique. His name is Danny Moeskops.

ACTION AND FLOW

With flat pendulum and ground casts, the power stroke is basically upward and forward through a comparatively modest arc, beginning with the rod tip low. Current thinking is that a rod needs to be as long and as stiff as its user can handle. That's the formula for maximum distance. Such a mighty pole may not be consistent with pleasant fishing, though, so many keen casters use softer rods on the beach.

With the classic high pendulum swing, the long and wide power arc traced by the rod tip is down, around and up. Getting around the corner at the bottom of the power arc is the critical part. It's easy to stay accurately on track with a rod designed specifically for the style, but often impossible with the stiff rods used for flat pendulum work.

A big swing style needs a rod flexible enough to go smoothly down and around the corner. Once there, the rod needs to stop bending much more, so that the arms have firm leverage to work against. The classic pendulum rod design, consisting of a stiff handle and meaty but flexible mid-section, does exactly that. It also happens to make a superb fishing rod as well.

A flat pendulum rod needs to be stiff and ►



Anglers come in all shapes and sizes, and no two ever cast in quite the same way

quick because the power comes in rapidly over a shorter arc. Apart from enough tip flexibility to get things moving smoothly when the action begins, the rod has to be man enough to deal with the surge of power that instantly follows. Wide pendulum styles stiffen the rod as the cast comes down and around – like drawing a longbow, if you like – while the modern way needs extra stiffness in the blank to provide strong leverage and resistance almost from the start.

Whatever our physique, strength and chosen casting technique, the priority is to find a rod with the right mixture of length and flex. Top blank makers and custom builders excel at producing supreme designs for a wide range of casting and fishing, and even more crucial they can tailor the rod to be the perfect match for its user. But here's the thing: only a few of those rods will be right for us personally. Buying a specialist rod because it works well for somebody else usually ends in tears. Try before you buy is the only true test.

BENEFITS OF GOING CUSTOM-MADE

Avoid straying so far down the power route that you destroy bait delivery and bite detection. A rod's design must also control how smoothly the cast gets away and whether baits stay intact. This doesn't apply to full-on tournament rods, of course.

In beach rods, all this must be achieved while retaining a high level of bite detection, general control and the rest of it. Many standard production rods do a pretty good job, yet there remains clear water between them and a genuine custom build.

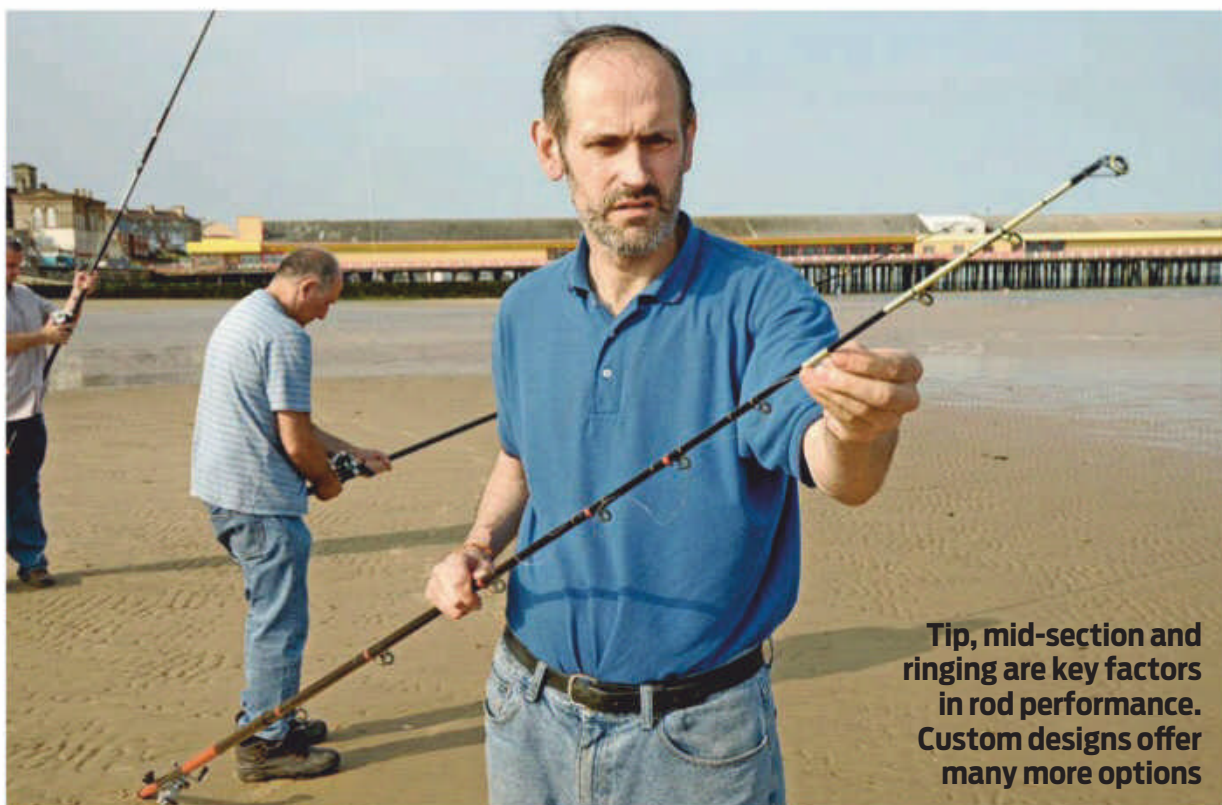
The main virtue of a custom rod is how beautifully it complements the angler and the kind of fishing and casting he does. That's where specialist blank makers and custom builders earn their reputations. To highlight just one point among many: the more refined blanks make excellent use of high-tech materials unaffordable in mass produced rods. Think Century, Zziplex and Italcanna.

High-performance glass fibre is a major reason why some rods are so desirable. For all the emphasis on carbon fibre as the supreme material, a properly crafted glass-rich tip is unrivalled for friendly casting, smooth bait delivery and wonderful bite detection. A surprising number of anglers and dealers still

don't know what super-glass is or what it does. But they instantly recognise and love the extra sweetness it produces, I'm sure.

Although materials and engineering issues lie at the heart of custom rod design, the little details also make a difference. Ring choice and positioning are a handy way to fine-tune a rod for casting method, reel position, line choice and preferred sinker weight. Appearance (fancy whippings and all that bling) counts heavily for many people. Custom builders and blank makers really score in these areas.

Like the best racehorses and gun dogs, their products are born of a peerless bloodline masterminded by craftsmanship and experience unachievable in the mass market. But you still have to choose wisely. ■



Tip, mid-section and ringing are key factors in rod performance. Custom designs offer many more options

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WHAT'S ON

■ **The Penn Sea League 2020 resumes on the first weekend in September. Due to Covid-19 some of these events listed here may have been cancelled or postponed.**

AUGUST

22: Tralee Bay SAC open, details TBA, Chris O'Sullivan 00353 (0)85 1532770.
22: Chesil League rnd 6 & open, Cogden, 6pm-11pm, £25 league entry, booking essential, Dave Lane 07977 132951.
23: Newport & District SAC open, St Brides, Tony Hart 07777 689289.
23: Whitby Summer League rnd 4 of 6, Saltburn pier to Filey Coble Landing, 4pm-8pm, heaviest fish match, weigh in by 8.30pm at Fleece car park, Church St, Whitby, £40 all-in for six matches, James 07773 702111.
29: Hastings & St Leonards AA Dave Moore Cup, 7pm-11pm, 01424 430120.
29-Sept 13: Whitby Charter Skippers Autumn Festival, www.wcsa.co.uk.
30: Leinster Shore Summer/Autumn League open, North Wexford, Leinster League rules, Paul 00353 (0)851425728.

SEPTEMBER

● **1:** Filey Brigg AAS John Smith's open – go-ahead under review.
3-6: Orvis Saltwater Fly Fishing Festival, Chichester, reception Sept 3, practice and teach-ins, Sept 4, competition Sept 5-6, see Facebook page, or www.orvis.co.uk, info from andy@zambuni.com.

5: Southern League rnd 9 of 12 & open, Portsmouth/Bournemouth, noon-5pm, pegged, measure & return, undersize fish count as 1oz, £15 match entry, £5 pools, £10 pair, team of five free, 2020 League entry £20, booking ends one hour before start, Darren 07919 073 232, Nick 07870 922 216, Mike 07983 579 596, Ian 07736 004 714 or Ant 07775 691 916.

5: North Kerry SAC open, Inch beach, 11am-3pm, James 00353 (0)87 776 9456.

● **6:** Welsh FSA East Region Shore League open, Marcross & Monknash, Steve Chadwick 07777 689289.

● **6:** Holt SAC charity open, Kelling, Mike 07858 758669 or Tony 07780 793141.

6: Hastings & St Leonards AA autumn plaice boat competition, 7am-3pm, 01424 430120.

6: Whitby Summer League rnd 5 of 6, Saltburn pier to Filey Coble Landing, 4pm-8pm, heaviest fish match, weigh in by 8.30pm at Fleece car park, Church St, Whitby, £40 all-in for six matches, James 07773 702111.

6-11: British Sea Angling Festival, Looe, approx. 8.30am-4.30pm each day, meet 7pm Sept 5 at Jolly Sailor, Looe, £395 entry includes presentation dinner, visit www.britishseaanglingfestival.co.uk

● **12:** Tralee Bay SAC open, Inch, 3pm-7pm, Chris 00353 (0)85 1532770.

● **12:** North West ASAC Personal Members open, Blue Bridge, Queensferry, 4.15pm-9.15pm, book on from 3pm at British Steel access road (off Welsh Road), two-hooks, weight conversion,

18cm minimum, £10 all-in, Richard Burrow 07763 529509.

● **12:** South Shore SAC Micheal Kearney open, Kilmickridge beaches, Co Wexford, 1pm-6pm, check in 10am-11.30am at Upton Court Hotel, €1,000 1st, €25 entry, €10 OAPs, juniors free, €5 pool, Thomas Keogh 00353 (0)86 837 8002 or Peter Flahive 00353 (0)86 855 0090.

12-13: Salcombe Small Boat Festival, Mike Spiller 07779 308093.

● **13:** South Shore SAC Big Fish open, Kilmuckridge beaches, Co Wexford, 1pm-6pm, check in 9.30am-10.30am at Upton Court Hotel, €25 entry, €10 OAPs, juniors free, €5 pool, Thomas Keogh 00353 (0)86 837 8002 or Peter Flahive 00353 (0)86 855 0090.

● **13:** West Coast Shore League rnd 6 & open, CBI, Co Mayo, 5pm-9pm, €25 entry, juniors free, IFSA members only, Sean Murray 00353 (0)86 3129787.

13: Whitby Summer League rnd 6 of 6, Saltburn Pier to Filey Coble Landing, 4pm-8pm, heaviest fish match, weigh in by 8.30pm at Fleece car park, Church St, Whitby, James 07773 702111.

19-27: Scarborough Angling Festival.

● **19:** Chesil League rnd 7 & open, Abbotsbury, 5pm-10pm, £25 league entry, booking is essential, Dave 07977 132951.

● **19:** Hastings & St Leonards AA Hollingsworth Cup, 9.30am-2.30pm, 01424 430120.

● **19:** Scarborough Corporation Challenge Trophy, 2pm-6pm, weigh-in by 7pm @ venue TBC, Pete Atkinson 07711 124032.

TIDES FOR AUGUST, SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

LONDON BRIDGE *

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AUGUST

20	THU	03.29	7.26	15.52	7.09
21	FRI	04.13	7.38	16.33	7.19
22	SAT	04.55	7.39	17.12	7.22
23	SUN	05.37	7.26	17.52	7.15
24	MON	06.20	6.99	18.33	6.99
25	TUE	07.05	6.66	19.18	6.77
26	WED	07.55	6.34	20.13	6.50
27	THU	08.55	6.05	21.21	6.24
28	FRI	10.06	5.86	22.39	6.11
29	SAT	11.27	5.87	** **	* **
30	SUN	00.00	6.21	12.45	6.14
31	MON	01.12	6.52	13.44	6.47

SEPTEMBER

1	TUE	02.08	6.81	14.31	6.68
2	WED	02.53	6.95	15.11	6.80
3	THU	03.32	6.99	15.46	6.88
4	FRI	04.07	6.98	16.18	6.93
5	SAT	04.39	6.92	16.48	6.94
6	SUN	05.06	6.81	17.15	6.86
7	MON	05.32	6.64	17.42	6.71
8	TUE	05.58	6.45	18.11	6.52
9	WED	06.28	6.22	18.45	6.30
10	THU	07.03	5.97	19.26	6.06
11	FRI	07.49	5.70	20.20	5.81
12	SAT	08.53	5.46	21.38	5.66

13	SUN	10.35	5.48	23.15	5.91
14	MON	** **	* **	12.03	5.90
15	TUE	00.29	6.40	13.08	6.40
16	WED	01.29	6.87	14.00	6.80
17	THU	02.20	7.20	14.45	7.07
18	FRI	03.06	7.40	15.27	7.27
19	SAT	03.50	7.49	16.08	7.42
20	SUN	04.32	7.46	16.48	7.47
21	MON	05.12	7.30	17.27	7.39
22	TUE	05.53	6.99	18.09	7.17
23	WED	06.35	6.62	18.54	6.85
24	THU	07.21	6.23	19.47	6.47
25	FRI	08.18	5.87	20.55	6.13
26	SAT	09.33	5.62	22.16	5.98
27	SUN	11.06	5.67	23.42	6.13
28	MON	** **	* **	12.26	6.04
29	TUE	00.56	6.52	13.23	6.44
30	WED	01.48	6.83	14.08	6.69

OCTOBER

1	THU	02.30	6.94	14.45	6.81
2	FRI	03.06	6.95	15.18	6.91
3	SAT	03.38	6.94	15.48	7.00
4	SUN	04.06	6.93	16.18	7.03
5	MON	04.32	6.87	16.45	6.97
6	TUE	04.58	6.75	17.13	6.83
7	WED	05.25	6.55	17.43	6.64
8	THU	05.55	6.33	18.17	6.43
9	FRI	06.30	6.08	18.58	6.21
10	SAT	07.14	5.82	19.51	5.98
11	SUN	08.13	5.55	21.02	5.81

* TIDAL VARIATIONS FROM LONDON

Wick	-2.29	Barry	+5.08
Lossiemouth	-2.00	Swansea	+4.42
Aberdeen	-0.18	Milford Haven	+4.37
Stonehaven	-0.08	Fishguard	+5.44
Cockenzie	+0.47	Aberystwyth	-6.11
Berwick	+0.54	Barmouth	-5.45
Blyth	+1.46	Holyhead	-3.28
North Shields	+1.47	Menai Bridge	-3.08
Hartlepool	+1.59	Colwyn Bay	-2.47
Whitby	+2.20	Southport	-2.55
Scarborough	+2.30	Blackpool	-2.50
Filey Bay	+2.45	Morecambe	-2.33
Bridlington	+2.58	Barrow (Ramsden)	-2.28
Skegness	+4.29	Whitehaven	-2.30
Hunstanton	+4.44	Kirkcudbright Bay	-2.25
Cromer	+4.56	Girvan	-1.51
Lowestoft	-4.23	Ayr	-1.44
Aldeburgh	-2.53	Lamlash	-1.45
Felixstowe pier	-2.23	Greenock	-1.19
Clacton	-2.00	Oban	+4.12
Southend-on-Sea	-1.22	Gairloch	+5.16
Herne Bay	-1.24	Ullapool	+5.36
Margate	-1.52	Belfast	-2.47
Deal	-2.38	Douglas	-2.44
Dover	-2.53		
Dungeness	-3.05	IRELAND	
Eastbourne	-2.48	Dun Laoghaire	-2.09
Newhaven	-2.47	Arklow	-4.41
Brighton	-2.51	Rosslare harbour	+4.39
Worthing	-2.36	Baginbun Head	+3.53
Portsmouth	-2.29	Ballycotton	+3.45
Ryde	-2.29	Courtmacsherry	+3.32
Southampton *	-2.53	Baltimore	+3.35
Poole (Entrance) *	-5.09	Bantry	+3.15
Bournemouth *	-5.09	Fenit pier	+3.13
Swanage *	-5.19	Kilrush	+4.02
Portland	+4.57	Galway	+3.36
Torquay	+4.40	Clifden Bay	+3.41
Dartmouth	+4.25	Westport Bay	+3.57
Plymouth	+4.05	Sligo harbour	+4.25
Fowey	+3.53	Killybegs	+4.21
Falmouth	+3.30	Rathmullan	+4.43
Newquay	+3.32		
Padstow	+3.45	NORTHERN IRELAND	
Barnstaple	+4.30	Belfast	-2.47
Weston-super-Mare		Portrush	+5.48
+5.05		Red Bay	-2.41
Cardiff (Penarth)	+5.15	Carrickfergus	-2.42

Your at-a-glance
match events planner
● = Penn Sea League

BIG MATCH OFF DUE TO COVID-19

The rescheduled SAMF UK Masters, due to be held on September 5-6 at Deal in Kent, has been cancelled.

It means those who had hoped to fish the event, one of the match calendar's big weekends, will have to wait until next year's event on March 13-14, 2021.

Organiser Tony Thomas said: "We are all disappointed that this decision has had to be made as we were hoping to get this show on the road this year after lockdown."

The main reasons were the low number of bookings prior to the lockdown, the vulnerability of the competitors to the Covid-19 virus and many of those who had booked intimating they would now not take part due to the pandemic.

All entry fees for 2020 will be carried forward to the 2021 event to be held at Hythe, Kent.

Anyone wanting a refund should text Tony Thomas, tel: 07780 793141, with bank sort code and account number.

● **19-25:** Daiwa Irish Pairs, County Kerry, £2,000 1st, limited to 72 pairs, nickhaward@btinternet.com

● **20:** Welsh FSA East Region Shore League open, Sully & Bendicks, 1.30pm-6.30pm, book in by noon at Cosmeston Park, Steve Chadwick 07777 689289.

● **20:** Bispham Angling Sea League rnd 9 of 11 & open, Gynn Wall, 11.30am-3.30pm, book on 10am at Five Bar Gate, £20 entry, 15cm minimum size, book only, Dave 07472 249294 or Tony 07702 229015.

● **20:** Scottish FSA open, Erskine, 11am-4pm, pegged, draw 8am-9am at Victoria Park, booking only, Chris 07872 944807, Mike 07933 003985 & Davy 07831 192717.

20: Deal AC (1919) Maritime open, 11am-3pm, Pat Heath 01304 361248 or T Sudds 01304 363968.

● **20:** Scarborough Hospital Challenge Bowl, fishing times TBC, weigh-in TBC, Pete Atkinson 07711 124032.

● **20:** Furness FA RNLI open, Kingfisher Priory, 12.30pm-3.30pm, pegged, catch and release, book in 11.30am-11.45am at Kingfisher car park, £20 all-in, Ged 07522 941308.

Fixtures must be sent in by match organisers only and must include full details and a contact telephone number. Emails received will be acknowledged. Send events at least eight weeks in advance of the fixture to cliff.brown@kelsey.co.uk

BASS ANGLERS' SPORTFISHING SOCIETY Words by David Curtis

HOLDING CORNWALL IFCA TO ACCOUNT

Chance to seek action over netting

OVER RECENT YEARS, the Save Our Sea Bass team (the campaigning arm of BASS.) has seen a steady stream of complaints about bass netting in Cornwall and the lack of action by Cornwall IFCA. But since we published our findings about commercial netting bass landings in Cornwall, this stream has turned into a deluge.

Here are some comments from sea anglers about the issue:

"Yet again the level of inaction is appalling from this useless organisation, who seem completely incapable of doing their job - this whole situation would be laughable if it wasn't so serious."

"It saddens me to say that nothing will get done until the bass fishery in Cornwall suffers a total collapse (and this day is fast approaching). Shame on you CIFCA - not fit for purpose."

"Nothing ever followed up. Maybe if more people report and provide evidence then they might get the idea that they aren't doing their jobs and their bosses might start to worry about wasting taxpayer's money."

"IFCA and MMO seem scared to do anything. Have the same problem - an individual always out of night. IFCA has been told yet nothing happens."

"The most intense illegal netting is taking place at the very worst time of year for the bass stocks, November through to February, when they are full of eggs and shoaling up, coming down around the Cornish coast in preparation to head out into channel to spawn and reproduce, bass are at their most vulnerable time in their lives. The illegal gill netters are literally waiting for them to turn up and ambush them."

"St Austell bay is almost completely void of bass, the exceptions being a few 20-25cm fish. During the last quarter of the year the bay is alive with netters at night. Myself and another local have seen this happening on many occasions for

many years. It won't stop until it not profitable for them."

And it's not only sea anglers who are complaining. One Cornish commercial hook-and-line fishermen recently told me: "No-one knows how many thousands of kilos of undersize bass are being dumped dead - because no authority is prepared to monitor the illegal fishery. I fear the figure would be heartbreaking."

LANDING DATA

In June we published a graph showing that while net-caught bass landings in the rest of England had fallen by 78 per cent since 2013, in Cornwall they have increased by 43 per cent. So the EU bass restrictions have been working in the rest of England but, seemingly, have been ignored in Cornwall.

Following comments from CIFCA that they were unsure how our figures had been arrived at (helpful hint: look at the MMO landing data), we decided to do some more digging. Since 2017, it has been illegal for netters to target bass, but that has apparently been no constraint to netters in the picturesque Cornish fishing port of Mevagissey, since their net-caught bass landings shot up from 1.2 tonnes in 2016 to 9.2 tonnes in 2019, a staggering seven-fold increase. Mevagissey has leapt up the table of ports landing net-caught bass: from 34th place in 2016 to first place in 2018 and 2019.

The silence from CIFCA has been deafening.

These findings are shocking and we must hold Cornwall IFCA to account. Even if you don't fish in Cornwall, the bass that are being killed there are bass that won't make it to your area. Please help by sending an email to Cornwall IFCA's committee asking them why bass landings have gone up and asking them to put this on the agenda of their next meeting in September. We have made it easy for you to do this at saveourseabass.org. ■

TIME MACHINE

Looking back through 40 years of Britain's biggest and best sea angling magazine...

SEPTEMBER

2010

■ Scientific advice suggested North Sea cod stocks were showing signs of holding their own, but the WWF was concerned that poor management of stocks threatened to undermine the long-term recovery of the species. Wonder if anyone took any notice?

■ A charter trip to the Channel Islands produced a 23lb turbot for Alex Miles, while fishing off Alderney, aboard Silver Spray, skippered by Andy Cumming, out of Poole, Dorset.

■ Lee Le Poidevin set a new Channel Islands' record for a tub gurnard when he caught an 8lb 2dr specimen on a legered fish strip during a boat trip.

■ Sea angling was being hailed as a growing pursuit in England and Wales. The Environment Agency claimed that 1.9 million people over the age of 12 fished in the sea.

■ Research suggested that bass stocks off the South West and South Wales had quadrupled since 1985 and that squid were more abundant in the northern area of the North Sea.

2000

■ All nine key commercial species, including cod and mackerel in the North Sea were outside acceptable safe limits and their rate of exploitation meant these fish would be unable to maintain their numbers, claimed a report by the (WWF) World Wide Fund for Nature.

■ The long-standing boat record for a marbled electric ray was smashed by an angler fishing the western Solent. Carl Ryan, from the Isle of Wight, caught the 10lb 6oz 8dr fish, beating the previous best of 2lb 8oz 8dr, while fishing



from a friend's small boat. Carl's record was beaten later that year with a 10lb 14oz 1ldr caught from the Channel Islands.

■ Concern was growing about vast numbers of flounders and wrasse being netted inshore for pot bait.

■ England international Ray Barron won the prestigious Plymouth

International Boat Festival for the third consecutive year. The Southampton angler's successes included victory in 1996 and top placings on five other occasions.

1990

■ Michael Pass, from Hastings, East Sussex, caught a 101lb conger eel, but revealed how his charter trip out of Rye turned into a night of drama when skipper Brian Joslin had to cut the line on what was thought to be an even bigger conger that could have smashed the British record. Michael was convinced the lost fish weighed more than 150lb.

■ A 32lb blonde ray was caught on a mackerel bait by Mike Scott, from Torquay, Devon, while fishing on Steve Parker's Two Rivers, out of Dartmouth.

■ An 8lb 1oz 8dr ballan wrasse was caught from Scotland's Isle of Whithorn by Duncan Hayes, from Lancashire. He caught it on a float-fished limpet on a size 3/0 hook.

At the time, the British record for a shore-caught ballan was 8lb 6oz 6dr.

■ Tony Oglesby and Randal Harper travelled from Cheshire to fish on Jim Folland's boat Buster, out of Plymouth, Devon, and caught plenty of coalfish, the best 20lb 8oz and 20lb 4oz. The fish were taken on artificial eels fished on flying-collar rigs.



■ Editor Mel Russ tried out a pre-production model of the long-awaited factory-built Abu Classic 6500CT multiplier reel. It would retail at £99.99.

1980

■ On a holiday charter trip out of Padstow, Cornwall, Eddie Severs, from Darlington, who normally fished from the shore, caught a 130lb porbeagle shark, 21lb turbot and 15lb bull huss – all fish he'd never caught before.

■ Fish of the month winner was Barry angler Don Cook with a 17lb bass from Aberthaw. It set a Welsh record and retains its place as the Principality's top shore-caught bass. See our article in this issue.

■ Coming close to setting a new record was Robert Curtis, of Bristol, who landed a 24lb 8oz pollack while fishing aboard Hopeful Lass, skippered by Alan Russell, out of Plymouth, Devon. It was 8oz short of the record. Seven years later in 1987, the record was beaten and now stands at 29lb 4oz.

■ Anglers from Liverpool Cormorants and Manchester Rock SAC caught an amazing 1,051lb of thornback rays during a North West ASAC knockout match on the Birkenhead-based boat Sea Hawk. They didn't keep count, but it was estimated between 90 and 100 rays to 14lb were boated.



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100mm 25g **£3.99**

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125mm 60g **£4.99**

Colours: red head, red/black white body, Rhubarb and custard, Sandeel, Blue, Chartreuse, Kaki, Firetail glitter.



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Gerry's Power Premium Braid is super strong and super sensitive with all the qualities of a much higher priced braid.

Sizes: 30lb (0.23mm), 50lb (0.32mm), 60lb (0.37mm), 80lb (0.40mm)

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8ft 14-42g **RRP £89.99 GP £79.99**

8ft 20-85g **RRP £89.99 GP £79.99**

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2500 Cap 140yds of 10lb mono **£39.99**

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5000 Cap 135yds of 20lb mono **£46.99**



NEW
FOR
2020

PENN FATHOM II SD CASTING MAGS

The Penn Fathom II star drag reel is built with a rigid metal frame and sideplates, now with added features to make it more angler friendly than ever. Featuring the fast gear access sideplate, allowing any angler to service the gears and the HT-100 drag system quickly and efficiently. The Penn live spindle design offers long, effortless casts, while the power gear ratios give ultimate torque for winning big fish. Magnetic casting braking system. Ratio 6.1:1.



12 CAP 270M X 0.35MM
GP £159.99

15 CAP 325M X 0.35MM
GP £169.99

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Great line lay? Check ✓
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These, in our
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reels available.



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7500LC 4.3:1, Cap 440yds x 15lb mono **RRP £209.99**

GP £149.99

GP £159.99

GP £164.99

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SUNSET SEAWALL PRO - 13ft 4-8oz 2 PIECE (EQUAL SECTION)

- Amazing power to weight ratio
- Clean to mixed ground great bite registration
- Performs best with a 5oz weight but will throw larger weights when needed
- High resistant carbon, fast action blank, great blend of power & feel
- Black K guides for either fixed spool or multiplier
- 12mm tip ring, a sliding reel seat, X-rap shrink tube, proper butt cap

RRP
£199.99
**GP
£129.99**

SUNSET SOLICA PRO - 14ft 4-8oz 3 PIECE

- Entry level 3 piece rod for the UK
- More powerful tip than the average continental rod
- Easy to compress with a simple overhead thump
- Best distances using 4 and 5oz weights, can cast larger leads when needed
- Black K guides for either fixed spool or multiplier
- 12mm tip ring, a sliding reel seat, X-rap shrink tube, proper butt cap.

RRP
£199.99
**GP
£129.99**

SUNSET KEMICA PRO - 14ft 4-8oz 3 PIECE

- Ultra lightweight shore rod, less than 500g
- In test hitting over 200 yards with 4 & 5oz plain leads with an over head thump
- Powerful tip to deal with larger species
- Black K guides suitable for either fixed spool or multiplier, 12mm tip ring, sliding reel seat, X-rap shrink tube, proper butt cap

RRP
£299.99
**GP
£199.99**

SUNSET MYTICA PRO - 14ft 4-8oz 3 PIECE

- Flagship rod of the range. Easy casting style, good bite detection, more power than usual 3 piece rods
- Best distances with 6oz weights however it performs well with leads from 4 to 8oz
- Black K guides for either fixed spool or multiplier
- 12mm tip ring, a sliding reel seat, X-rap shrink tube, proper butt cap.

RRP
£399.99
**GP
£299.99**

BOAT RODS

SUNSET BREAKWATER BOAT RODS - 2 PIECE (EQUAL SECTION)

- We have gone back to scratch when designing this rod. We wanted to produce a lightweight and responsive blank yet making it as durable as possible due to how much abuse rods normally get on the boat.
- After 7 different testing models we finally created the final product which is perfect. The equal section blank also features a slightly softer glass tip for bite registration and to give more control when playing larger fish on braided lines.
- We have also updated the rods to be suitable to both fixed spool and multiplier reels we have noticed fixed spools becoming much more popular on boats.
- We have used black K guides finishing with a 10mm tip which easily allows, a swivel, clip or large knot through without interfering too much.
- The reel seat is fixed in an suitable position for both comfort and usability and features ergonomic grips either side. Each rod also features a durable gimbal style butt allowing it to be used in and butt pad.
- The range consists of 3 models, 12-20lb, 20-30lb, 30-50lb to cover most boat angling around the UK. All rods are 7ft 6" in length.

RRP
£99.99
**GP
£59.99**

Century



UK MADE



NEW TIP TORNADO GRAPHEX SPORT 13ft 11" (125-225g)	
Heavy - Mixed	NORM £595.00 GP £520.00
NEW TIP TORNADO GRAPHEX SUPERMATCH 13ft 6" (125-200g)	
Light Heavy - Mixed - Smooth	NORM £570.00 GP £499.00
NEW TIP TORNADO GRAPHEX MATCH 13ft 6" (125-175g)	
Mixed - Smooth	NORM £555.00 GP £485.00
NEW TIP TORNADO GRAPHEX SUPERMATCH LD 13ft (50-150g)	
Mixed - Smooth	NORM £530.00 GP £465.00
NEW TIP TORNADO GRAPHEX ULTRALITE ST 13ft (50-125g)	
Smooth	NORM £510.00 GP £445.00
EXCALIBUR TT 14ft 10" (4-8oz)	NORM £685.00 GP £599.00
EXCALIBUR J CURVE 13ft 6" (4-7oz)	NORM £570.00 GP £499.99
EXCALIBUR C CURVE 13ft 10" (4-8oz)	NORM £570.00 GP £499.00
EXCALIBUR SRE (3-7oz)	13FT 8" NORM £600.00 GP £525.00
	15FT NORM £625.00 GP £549.00
KOMPRESSOR WR300 13ft (4-8oz)	NORM £540.00 GP £475.00
KOMPRESSOR SUPER SPORT SS 13ft 10" (4-8oz)	NORM £490.00 GP £430.00
KOMPRESSOR SPORT S 13ft 10" (4-7oz)	NORM £485.00 GP £425.00
ELIMINATOR T700 15FT (4-7oz)	NORM £625.00 GP £525.00
ELIMINATOR T800 SGT 13ft 6" (4-7oz)	NORM £570.00 GP £499.99
ELIMINATOR T900 SGT 14ft 4" (4-8oz)	NORM £625.00 GP £549.00
ELIMINATOR T1000 14ft 10" (4-8oz)	NORM £685.00 GP £599.00
ELIMINATOR T1200 14ft 10" (5-8oz)	NORM £715.00 GP £625.00
SALVADOR BUSTOS T1200 14ft 4" (5-8oz)	NORM £715.00 GP £625.00

Century

FIREBLADE
13ft 4-6oz

A superb and responsive beach rod designed and built in the UK.

£259.99



Zziplex

FULL RANGE
IN STOCK

All Zziplex rods now come with Fuji Black K guides, shrink tube, coasters + rod bag. All professionally finished in house in Zziplex colours Red, White & Blue, but any custom build can be accommodated just call for advice!

Note: We can now offer Fuji Titanium Torzite K Guides for the customer that wants the best!



UK'S
LEADING
STOCKIST OF
ZZIPIX
RODS!

FIN-NOR REELS NOW IN STOCK!

NEW
IN

FIN NOR MAQUESA
LEVER DRAGS

Precision machined from 6061 aluminum to be lighter, stronger, faster and more refined than other super-sized "international" reels. Marquesa also gives anglers the ability to downsize with superline on a much smaller reel. It's the ideal compact stand-up reel with big fish-stopping power. Comes in single and 2-speed.



12 SINGLE SPEED	
Cap 270yds of 15lb Mono. Ratio 6.1:1	RRP £269.99 GP £242.99
16 SINGLE SPEED	
Cap 290yds of 20lb Mono. Ratio 6.1:1	RRP £299.99 GP £269.99
30 SINGLE SPEED	
Cap 320yds of 30lb Mono. Ratio 6.1:1	RRP £359.99 GP £324.99
20 2 SPEED	
Cap 300yds of 25lb Mono. Ratio 6.1:1/3.1:1	RRP £329.99 GP £324.99
30 2 SPEED	
Cap 320yds of 30lb Mono. Ratio 6.1:1/3.1:1	RRP £429.99 GP £389.99

FIN NOR LETHAL SPIN

A high-performance saltwater spinning reel. Lethal spinning reels boast an all-aluminum body with braid-ready spool and high-lockdown carbon fiber MegaDrag™ System. And with MegaShield™ multi-layer corrosion protection, you'll find a very durable saltwater reel that will give you more bang for your buck. Our Lethal 100-size reel adds a triple-supported spool shaft, a forged-brass main gear and a back-up pawl and ratchet anti-reverse.



40 Cap 230yds of 10lb mono Ratio 5.2:1	RRP £109.99 GP £99.99
60 Cap 240yds of 14lb mono Ratio 4.9:1	RRP £109.99 GP £99.99
80 Cap 330yds of 20lb mono Ratio 5.2:1	RRP £119.99 GP £109.99

TOURNAMENT BOAT RODS

These are some of the best designed boat rods we have stocked and made with Daiwa's latest materials and technologies including X45 carbon technology making the blanks ultra lightweight and responsive. Each rod features the highest quality fittings.



7ft 6" 2pc 8-15lb	RRP £175 GP £149.99
7ft 6" 2pc 15-25lb	RRP £175 GP £149.99
7ft 6" 2pc 24-40lb	RRP £175 GP £149.99
7ft 6" 2pc 8-15lb	RRP £175 GP £149.99
7ft 6" 2pc 8-15lb	RRP £175 GP £149.99
7ft 6" 2pc 8-15lb	RRP £175 GP £149.99
7ft 6" 4pc Travel 15-25lb	RRP £195 GP £164.99
6ft 6" 3pc Travel 30-60lb	RRP £190 GP £164.99

SHARK FISHING

We are the leading supplier of dedicated shark tackle in the UK

AFW 49 STRAND WIRE (30ft)

The 'must have' wire when targeting large sharks around the UK coast.
90lb £9.99 175lb £14.99
275lb £16.99 400lb £16.99
(Matching crimps available)



HI-SEA'S GRAND SLAM MONO LEADER (100yds)

The best leader material on the market. It's tough yet super supple with great knot strength.
100lb £9.99 130lb £11.99
150lb £12.99 200lb £14.99
250lb £17.99 300lb £19.99
(Matching Sleeve/crimps available)



PENN SQUALL 2 SPEED LEVER DRAG'S

An amazingly powerful and well built range of reels designed to tame even the largest species. Fitted with a 2 speed retrieve and a huge drag, these will not let you down.



16VS 540yds/30lb mono (5.4:1/2.1:1)	RRP £229.99 GP £199.99
30VSW 595yds/50lb mono (5.4:1/2.1:1)	RRP £289.99 GP £229.99
50VSW 890yds/50lb mono (2.9:1/1.5:1)	RRP £329.99 GP £259.99

PENN ALLY BOAT

If you're looking for a workhorse to do the heavy work on your boat, look no further. 1 piece rods with full Ali butt, Pac bay reels seat and ultra durable guides.

30/80lb 6ft 6" Standard guides	RRP £134.99 GP £119.99
30/80lb 6ft Roller tip and butt	RRP £159.99 GP £139.99
50/100lb 6ft Roller tip and butt	RRP £159.99 GP £139.99